LEARNING / F1
Washington SyCip plays Santa Claus to public education on his birthday

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Filipino maid HK's most severe case of swine flu

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More cargo ships laid up at Davao port

METRO / A23
Blasts rock 2 banks in Camanava

NEWS / A3
'Huaning' 8th tropical storm to enter RP

CBCP head pleased with chosen successor

THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT OF THE Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) is pleased with the election of his successor amid a perception that Malacañang had a hand in the selection of the prelate who will take over the CBCP in December.

"I am happy that he is my successor

CBCP, A5

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, July 13, 2009 ★ 9 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 215 P18

Barcodes on trees help to save forests

LONDON—DEEP IN the world's tropical rainforests, workers are hammering thousands of barcodes into hardwood trees to help in the fight against illegal logging, corruption

BARCODES, A14

Vagni united with family

Sulu gov urges war on Sayyaf

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor

AN ALL-OUT MILITARY OFfensive against the Abu Sayyaf is the only way to stop kidnapping in Sulu, Gov. Abdusakur Tan said yesterday after the release of Italian aid worker Eugenio Vagni.

"The Abu Sayyaf might as well brace themselves for the real thing. We cannot just allow them to continue terrorizing the province with their criminal and terrorism activities," Tan said.

He said the government had all the resources at its disposal to crush the al-Qaida-linked group based in Sulu.

Asked what he meant by the "real thing," Tan said: "What else? The war that they (Abu Sayyaf bandits) said they are ready to face anytime. Let us now see if they are really not afraid to die in battle as what they usually brag about in their interviews with the media."

Despite the release of Vagni, Sulu will continue to be off-limits to workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) until they are given assurance that the bandits will not touch them.

"We will continue our work in Mindanao because we have a duty to be there. But the ICRC will not come back to Sulu until we have enough assurance that they will respect the International Humanitarian Law," said Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of

RELEASE, A20

FAMILY BOND Freed Abu Sayyaf captive Eugenio Vagni hugs his wife Kmara and 2-year-old daughter Letizia upon his arrival at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City on a private plane that flew from Zamboanga City

'I thought this day will never happen'

LOOKING GAUNT AND HAGGARD, EUGENIO Vagni yesterday said he never thought he would come out alive from six months of Abu Sayyaf captivity on Jolo Island and even imagined "my head in a big basket."

But thanks to the nagging wives of the leader of his kidnappers, Albader Parad, who were captured on Tuesday at a military checkpoint, the 62-year-old Italian engineer of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross is now free and unharmed.

Appearing before reporters in Zamboanga City after his release early yesterday from a 179-day ordeal in harsh jungle, a bearded and thin-looking Vagni was at times emotional as he thanked the Philippine military and local officials for working for his freedom.

"I am happy because I am free. I thank all the people that led to this happening," Vagni said, struggling to remain composed as he talked of his excitement at seeing his wife and family. "I thought it would never happen. I called my wife, and I told her, 'I love you.'"

The arrest of Rowena "Honey" Abass and Nurmina "Nimang" Amenoddin, two of Parad's wives, played a crucial role in the release of Vagni, Navy spokesperson Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo told the Inquirer.

"The arrest became a pressure on Parad because with two dear women nagging, he was persuaded to help work out Vagni's release."

Arevalo denied there was a "prisoner swap." He said the release of the women, arrested in connection with the kidnapping, would depend "on the careful

FREEDOM, A19

VAGNI (right) chats with Martin McDermott, ICRC regional representative.

Sighs of relief from Rome, Manila

THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF ITALian aid worker Eugenio Vagni emerged from their own "painful nightmare" as sighs of relief in Manila and Rome greeted his release from Abu Sayyaf captivity.

"There were moments that I believed he would never come back," Vagni's brother Francesco told reporters in Italy. The two brothers had spoken on the phone, the Italian news agency Ansa reported yesterday.

Pope Benedict XVI took Vagni's release as a "sign of hope and of faith," Ansa also quoted the Vatican spokesperson, Rev. Federico Lombardi, as saying.

Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini expressed "great satisfaction following the freeing... of our compatriot." Frattini also passed on his "gratitude to the Philippine authorities."

"I'm very elated that [Vagni's] ordeal is over," said Sen. Richard Gordon, head of the Philippine National Red Cross. "It's been six months of constant fear of gun battles, of being ordered around, of being held away from his wife and children."

Abu Sayyaf bandits seized Vagni, together with his International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) colleagues Andreas Notter of Switzerland and Mary Jean Lacaba of the Philippines in January, while on a humanitarian mission on Jolo island.

Vagni, 62, was the last to be released among the three captives. Notter and

SIGH, A19

Honduras crisis warning to would-be tinkerers of Charter

By Amando Doronila

THE DEADLOCK ON THE CONSTItutional crisis in Honduras hardened during the weekend after mediation by Costa Rica failed to soften the stand of the Honduran interim government that ousted President Manuel Zelaya would be arrested as a criminal upon his return to the country.

Returning from talks in Costa Rica, the interim president, Roberto Micheletti, said: "We are in agreement with his (Zelaya's) return here—but to be sent directly to the courts."

ANALYSIS

The intractability of the interim government highlighted the deepening political crisis in Honduras triggered by Zelaya's plan to consult the people on June 28 on whether they supported moves to change the Constitution.

The vague referendum sought to lift the current one-term limit for the president and pave the way for Zelaya's possible reelection.

Acting on orders of the Supreme Court, the military arrested Zelaya on June 28, huddled him into a plane and exiled him to Costa Rica.

The ouster of Zelaya was the first in Central America since 1963 when the military forced Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano to step down. For much of the 20th century, military coups were common in Latin America.

In the case of Honduras, the military dominated political life until the mid-1980s. Despite the end of the era of coups as a means for political change, Honduras never kicked off the military intervention habit.

HONDURAS, A21

NDF leader Luis Jalandoni and his wife Consuelo Ledesma arrive at Nala.

NDF leader's visit buoys peace hopes

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Nikko Dizon

THE CHIEF NEGOTIATOR OF THE communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) flew quietly into Manila yesterday on a "strictly" personal visit that a leftist lawmaker said could be a healthy sign

NDF LEADER'S, A2

QUICK CHAT President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes US Central Intelligence Agency Director Leon Edward Panetta during his courtesy call in Malacañang.

Obama to meet GMA July 30 in Washington

By Christian V. Esguerra and Jerome Aning

JUST AS THE UNITED STATES' CHIEF spy, Central Intelligence Agency Director Leon Panetta, was flying to yesterday for a lightning visit, the White House announced that US President Barack Obama would meet with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Washington on July 30.

It's a meeting Malacañang has long been hoping for.

At least twice before, Ms Arroyo failed to meet Obama during her trips to the United States. The first was when she made a state visit in June last year, which coincided with the US presidential campaign. Obama, instead, wrote her a letter.

In February this year, Ms Arroyo also flew to Washington to attend the annual US National Prayer Breakfast, where Obama spoke. Again, she didn't get a chance to meet him.

Last November, Ms Arroyo once more flew to the United States, this time to Chicago, Obama's hometown. Like before, there was no meeting.

But all that seems to be in the past. A US announcement at the week-

OBAMA, A4

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

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'RP likely to escape recession'

Think tank sees slow growth in '09, no part in world recovery

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES WILL LIKELY AVOID A RECESsion this year but must contend with slow growth through next year, New York-based think tank Global Source said.

"Though the sharp slowdown of economic activity in the first quarter has set the pace for the entire year, we don't expect conditions rapidly deteriorating from that point forward," said a July 10 economic report titled "Small's Ours," written by Philippine economists Romeo Bernardo and Margarita Fonacier.

Global Source predicted that the Philippine economy would grow by 0.3 to 1 percent this year, down from its previous forecast of 2.5 percent growth. The new forecast is slightly more bearish than the government's latest forecast of the gross domestic product (GDP) expanding 0.8-1.8 percent.

The market's consensus forecast on Philippine GDP growth for the year has gone down to 1.3 percent from 2.5 percent before the first-quarter growth of 0.4 percent was announced.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank are even more bearish than the market consensus, predicting a GDP decline of 1 percent and 0.5 percent this year, respectively.

In ruling out the possibility of an economic contraction, Global Source pointed out that recent moves to stimulate the economy had an impact on the country's GDP growth in the first quarter.

"The effects of higher fiscal spending may soon start to become perceptible, especially as the elections near, while expectations of a global recovery should help terminate contraction somewhat later in the year," it said.

But looking ahead, Global Source said an upturn in the world economy, especially a weak one, may not mean much for the Philippines.

"Unusually, while low export vulnerability has kept the country sheltered from the global downturn, this same bottom presents a floor rolling any global revival to the left. With advanced countries on a slow track to recovery and nothing much on the domestic front to spark economic activity, we see the Philippine economy still performing below trend even in the subsequent years," the research group said.

Coupled with likely weak recovery in advanced economies, Global Source sees 3-3.5 percent GDP growth next year.

The report said the current pessimism in the country's GDP was coming from the sudden weakening in investor spending which had been a stable engine of growth for nearly two decades. GDP, the total amount of goods produced and services rendered in the domestic economy, is widely considered the single most important indicator of economic health.

Global Source said it was "savvy" of the registered statistics for several reasons:

- Remittances during the period slowed but did not decline while the peso correspondingly depreciated;
- Peso-basing grocers had actually been due to softer prices of oil and commodities;
- Minimum-wage tax exemptions should have worked to increase personal incomes; and
- Employment numbers did not deteriorate radically based on government statistics.

"The sharp slowdown in consumer spending, which is totally measured with the help of production data, likely leaned in part on what appeared to be a plunge in tobacco consumption as manufacturers front-loaded sales to marketing arms in order to escape a scheduled increase in excise taxes this year," Global Source said.

It said that value-added taxes had risen by 14 percent annually in the first quarter. Global Source said this indicated that the domestic economy may not have been so anemic as the national income accounts estimates had suggested.

"Hence, we will not be surprised to see some correction upwards in future periods," it said.

But Global Source said its growth outlook of 0.3, 1 percent carried some downside risks, such as a potential 3-percent decline in overseas remittances as the global recession spawns unemployment.

Bishops in assembly pray for Cory; so do Tarlac folk

By Norman Bordadora, Jr. Manila and Russell Arador, Inquirer Central Luzon

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday celebrated Mass for former President Corazon Aquino as she continues to battle cancer.

Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, CBCP president, officiated the Mass that was attended by a good number of prelates at the Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila.

The CBCP held its plenary assembly near the weekend where it elected a new president to the post as Tuesday.

Bishop Nereo Odchimar

"God our heavenly Father, as we pray for our beloved Tita Cory Aquino, we join her family and loved ones; we join our people in this country and fellow Filipinos and others throughout the world ... as she battles with great courage the cancer which has afflicted her for many months now, read part of the prayer said for Aquino during the Mass. Romeo Jovian

President Fidel V. Ramos visited the bedridden with a copy of the prayer.

"In this critical moment in her illness, in the hours in increasingly heavy burden, with great confidence we entrust her to Your goodness and love. We join her loved ones in their complete and abiding trust in Your infinite healing power," the prayer said.

The CBCP news website said some 80 cardinals and bishops offered the Mass for the former president.

A second Legislature who said "the CBCP is one with the rest of the Filipino people" in offering prayers for the recovery of the former president.

Among those at the Mass were Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, Cebu Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, Bishops Bishop Antonio Tobayan, Jr., Jesus CBCP president Archbishop Capalla of Davao and Orlando Quevedo of Cotabato, and Jaro Archbishop Lagdameo, Jr. Romeo Jovian

Meanwhile, parishes and households in Tarlac have also been praying overtime for Aquino, the first president from the province.

A Mass for Aquino was offered last weekend. San Sebastian Cathedral in Tarlac City's Dominic heavy rains, officials from the city and from 17 towns joined hundreds of people in praying for Aquino's recovery.

Board Member Fred Angeles Evgenio Facuda said the country will needed Aquino.

Tarlac Gov. Victor Mayor Gerardo Mendoza, whose father had worked 40 years at the Aquino's General Asucarera de Tarlac (GAT), said the former president "is a true icon of democracy and a model public servant."

"She had shown during her presidency the highest traits of selflessness (pagsasarili) and what it takes to be a public servant," he said. "As a transition president, she could have run for another term, but she stood firm on her commitment to only serve as a transition president."

Capas Mayor Reynaldo Catacutan, president for Tarlac of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, said his town benefited from Aquino's presidency.

Magazine traces roots of Arroyo-Lopez feud

By Gaeiro L. Lucas

"THE GOVERNMENT BACKED ATTEMPT TO take control of the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) has its roots in a clan war among the Lopezes, with on one side and the Mesiaque gale and Arroyos on the other that has been raging for years of the last century, according to investigative reporter Greg Rushford.

More important by the dominance of such powerful clans—and their occasional fights for control over sections of the economy—has been building bank the country as can, and, moving its power to the western journalist in an article entitled "Clan Warfare Hobbles the Philippines" published in the July/August edition of the Far Eastern Economic Review.

"The bad feelings between the Mesiaques and Lopezes started more than four decades ago," Rushford said, quoting a 1996 study by Old Senator of Democratic Senator Alfred McCoy "When Ferdinand Mesiaque, President Arroyo's father, was elected president of the Philippines in 1965, he had good reason to dislike the Lopez family.

"You only had [family patriarch Eugenio Lopez and his younger brother Fernando] destroyed in the world's campaign but they were maneuvering for control of Congress to position Fernando for a presidential run in 1965."

Because of this, President Mesiaque then "employed the full powers of the state to bring the Lopez empire down."

According to the article, criminal complaints were filed in 1967 by Mesiaque's justice department charging the Lopez brothers with corruption in a land deal, while the Bureau of Internal Revenue went after Lopez-owned sugar mills. The Mesiaque administration also tried to remove Eugenio Lopez from the board of Meralco, which was then already the largest electricity distributor in the country.

"Ultimately, the move failed, and Mesiaque was defeated in his 1969 reelection bid by a rising young politician named Ferdinand Marcos, who replaced the Lopez family's support," Rushford said.

Meanwhile, Rushford pointed out, the bad blood between the family of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and the Lopezes were even further back—as far as the 1930s when the patriarch of Benigno Aquino and Mariano Arroyo, the grandfather of the First Gentleman.

In 1929, Eugenio Lopez Sr. owned the local newspaper, El Tiempo, and used it to launch himself as a power broker in Iloilo City, according to McCoy's.

"Governor Arroyo's problem was that he was robbing Peter to finance illegal gambling racket—although he wouldn't deny the fact that gambling was going on when the Lopez-owned El Tiempo exposed it in a series of well-documented investigative reports," Rushford said.

The ensuing battle between the Lopezes and Arroyos ended with US colonial authorities giving the Lopez forces, having consolidated their he had indicted taken bribes from a gambling syndicate.

"This defeat, indeed disconcerting, of the province's leading politician was a crushing political victory for Eugenio Lopez who, at 29, was still a neophyte politician," according to McCoy's book.

Rushford pointed out that the Arroyo family never regained its political clout until the future First Gentleman married Gloria Macapagal.

"Although the President and her husband have denied any ill feelings toward the Lopezes, the recent headlines in Manila suggest otherwise," Rushford said.

Rushford said the story is an example of the main issue he believes is preventing the country from reaching the economic and political growth of its regional peers.

"Sadly, despite her boasts, Ms Arroyo's speech conveyed a negative message about her country's development, because it showed she is inclined about the key economic block to growth. That is, unwillingness by the President to accept speech in Japan where she proclaimed that the Philippines was headed in the right direction, thanks to her leadership.

Pinay has most severe swine flu case in HK

A FILIPINO MAID IN HONG KONG IS IN critical condition with influenza A(H1N1), the southern Chinese territory's Centre for Health Protection (CHP) announced over the weekend.

It was the second serious case of the virus in Hong Kong, according to an article on www.news.gov.hk, which is run by the Information Services Department of the Hong Kong government.

CHP controller Dr. Thomas Tsang said the maid, 37, needed mechanical ventilation to help her breathe while undergoing treatment in the intensive care unit at United Christian Hospital.

Tsang said the center is investigating whether the maid had another unknown disease that could have led to her critical condition.

"It is the most severe case (that Hong Kong has faced," a hospital spokesperson told Agence France-Presse.

Her employers, a couple living in Kwun Tong, also had flu-like symptoms. As the wife is pregnant, she has been admitted to a hospital for observation, while the husband was prescribed Tamiflu.

Tsang said the patient developed a fever a day after arriving in Hong Kong from the Philippines on June 28 and was given medications at a private clinic. She returned for a follow-up examination on July 1 when an X-ray showed her lungs were clear.

Her condition quickly deteriorated, though, and she was admitted to United Christian Hospital's intensive care unit with serious pneumonia symptoms on July 7.

Results of tests taken on July 7 and 8 showed she was negative for H1N1. But samples on Friday showed that she was positive for the virus, while further tests carried out by the CHP's lab confirmed on Saturday that she was infected with H1N1 virus.

Jerome Aning| AP

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Senate bent on probe even without GMA

THE SENATE IS DETERMINED TO "UNRAVEL" an alleged conspiracy between Malacañang and giant pharmaceutical companies to sabotage Congress's push for lower medicine prices, even if President Macapagal-Arroyo won't attend a Senate probe of the matter.

Sen. Miriam Santiago said he wanted to have the President personally explain at today's hearing of the quality-affordable medicines oversight committee what has been holding up the signing of an executive order imposing maximum retail prices (MRP) on 22 essential medicines since June 16.

"It is important that we know what was agreed upon in the secret meeting in Malacañang between the President and her Cabinet and the multinational giants. A year has passed and the Cheaper Medicines Law has yet to go into effect. Has the something to do with the secret deal?" asked Santiago's statement.

Aside from the July 8 meeting, the vouchers of the oversight committee said they would look into the status of the IRR and updates on the implementation of the law, the emergence of marketing discount schemes of drug companies, and the availability and affordability of medicines and diagnostic kits for the influenza A (H1N1) virus influenza.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde has accused Bayan of malice and scheming for maneuvering the President to the hearing, saying it was improper for one branch of government to call the leader of a co-equal branch.

Remonde said it was the duty of the President to hate out the giberishes of multinational drug companies. He said Health Secretary Francisco Duque III would suffice to represent the executive department at the inquiry. GMC, Gabuyegan.ph

'Huaning' 8th storm to enter RP

THE EIGHTH STORM THIS YEAR HAS ENtered the country, the weather bureau said yesterday.

"Tropical depression 'Huaning' was estimated at 280 kilometers east southeast of Basco, Batanes, according to the last afternoon weather bulletin issued by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Pagasa said Huaning has maximum sustained winds of 55 kph near the center and was moving northwest at 22 kph. It is expected to be at 740km north of Basco.

Pagasa has raised signal no. 1 in the Batanes, Babuyan, and Calayan groups of islands.

Huaning will bring rains and gusty winds in these areas. Its coastal waters will be moderate to rough.

Huaning was earlier spotted as a low pressure area east of northern Luzon and developed into a storm only yesterday morning.

Pagasa weather forecaster Joel Jimena told the Inquirer by phone that Huaning will enhance the southwest monsoon which in turn will bring rains in the rest of the country. WMS/DGO

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RP outsmiles neighbors, raises P1M for Unicef

By Doxin L. Laco

ONE PESO FOR EVERY SMILE captured on a camera phone?

Sony Ericsson was clearly trying to market its latest gadget, but it managed to do so while helping society's underprivileged at the same time.

On Saturday, the company donated P1 million to the local unit of the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), culminating a two-month campaign that "collected" one million smiles from users of its products.

As part of its commitment to Unicef's children's literacy campaign, Sony Ericsson donated P1 for every smile captured in its camera phone kiosks scattered throughout SM shopping malls around the country.

The donation will go to the Unicef children's education programs.

"It has been said that everyone smiles in the same language," Sony Ericsson corporate vice president Heikazu Ishizaki said as he turned over the check to Unicef country representative Tatsuo Tobia at SM North Edsa.

Ishizaki said the Philippine edition of the regional campaign set a record for the company in terms of the number of smiles "collected."

"We launched the Spread the Smiles campaign in five countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand," he said, adding that over a two-day period, 1,000 smiles were collected in Indonesia, 25,000 in Malaysia and 10,000 in Thailand.

"And one million smiles in the Philippines," he said.

Because of this, Unicef beneficiaries "can smile together with them," he said. "It is truly a heartwarming gesture."

According to Unicef, children make up about 42 percent of the country's population. Although enrollment in primary schools is high at 90 percent, it significantly declines to only 58 percent for high school.

That, for every 10 Filipino schoolchildren, only six will finish grade school, and only four will eventually complete high school.

"This is unfortunate and we hope that through this campaign, we can touch the lives of some of these children," Sony Ericsson general manager Tetsuo Hamano said. "We are proud to announce that over a million Filipinos participated in this campaign and gave [their] smiles."

Apart from SM Supermalls, Sony Ericsson also partnered with Digicon retailer around the "smile zone" theme. The "Spread the Smile" campaign collected smile photographs from mall booths. Sony Ericsson outlets and through its official website.

During Saturday's turnover ceremony, Sony's "smile ambassador" Sarah Geronimo serenaded the audience with a song and launched the new "Sarah Phone" which is a limited edition Sony Ericsson C510 in its "orange is" color.

POPULAR SINGER SARAH Geronimo performs during the turnover by Sony Ericsson to Unicef of P1 million representing the number of smiles she first collected in the Philippines, which beats the totals collected in neighboring countries. Sony also unveiled its red Sarah Geronimo phone.

Correction

IN THE JULY 10 ISSUE, an article on Page A8—"RP in ring of fire"—misstated that people may safely observe the partial solar eclipse on July 22 through sunglasses, smoked glass, X-ray film or photographic film, according to the United States' National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa), one should view eclipses directly through filters specifically designed for such purpose. Using other materials can be harmful to the eyes.

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Morticians take extort complaint to Net

By Beverly T. Hamstead

IN AN AGE WHERE practically anything can be done online, why not complain to your local government officials using the Internet.

In Valenzuela City, a group of local morticians quickly got libsyan Ilhmondo Guichalian's attention when they emailed him complaining of alleged extortion by security guards at the Valenzuela General Hospital (Val Gen).

The Valenzuela Morticians Association (VMA) told Guichalian Val Gen guards asked for money before cadavers would be released in its members for servicing and burial.

This prompted Guichalian to call for an immediate investigation and a meeting between the VMA and Val Gen hospital officials.

Val Gen head Dr. Marie Punay at the Friday morning agreed to an investigation of the security guards of the VMA filed a formal complaint.

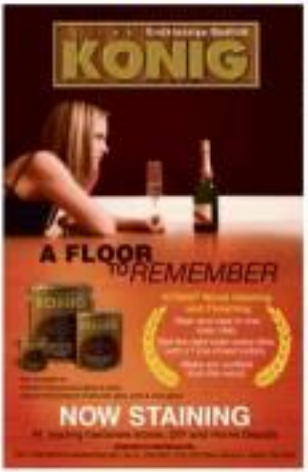
He also ordered a change in the procedure for claiming cadavers to remove control from the security guards.

The VMA alleged the security guards had been collecting P1,000 per cadaver from the morticians. Marilyn Mora, Valenzuela city public information chief, said in an interview.

She explained that the cadaver release forms were supposed to be approved by the Val Gen laboratory but since the security guards had the keys to the holding rooms, they had virtual control over the release of bodies.

While Guichalian does not have administrative jurisdiction over Val Gen Hospital, Mora said, he initiated an investigation because Valenzuela residents were affected.

She said that Val Gen, a public hospital, is managed by the Department of Health.



Obama to meet GMA on July 30 in Washington

From page A1

ted said Obama would receive Ms Arroyo at the White House for talks on "ways to enhance US-Philippine cooperation on critical global issues, including counterterrorism and climate change, as well as further the traditionally strong alliance and bond between our nations."

Ms Arroyo will also meet key US government officials and members of Congress, private sector partners and business groups.

She will be the first leader from Southeast Asia to visit the United States under the Obama administration, the White House said.

US wants it

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said the official invitation came from the White House on Saturday and was relayed to Malacañang by the US Embassy.

Remonde said it was Obama who "initiated" the meeting. "The statement of the White House is clear—they invited our President," he said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said Ms Arroyo was expected to discuss the Philippines' "poverty-alleviation and economic resiliency programs, good governance, counterterrorism efforts and its contributions to peace and security in the region."

Talks with Panetta

Ms Arroyo held a 30-minute, closed-door meeting with Panetta during which Malacañang assured the head of the US spy agency that the recent spate of bombings in Mindanao was working to worry about.

"He was given an overview and we assured him that this is nothing," National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzalez told the Inquirer by phone.

The bombings, along with the release of Indian hostage Ingrid Vagi by the Abu Sayyaf bandits, were among the problems merely security matters tackled at the meeting, Gonzalez said.

The two sides also discussed Philippine military offensives that have killed several key Abu Sayyaf commanders, Gonzalez said, according to the Associated Press.

His interlocutors in the Obama administration rejected an Abu Sayyaf demand for a troops pullout from most of Jolo Island in exchange for the freedom of three Red Cross aid workers abducted on Jan. 15.

"That's the right thing to do," Gonzalez quoted Panetta as saying. "We should not yield to terrorism," Panetta said.

Also present were US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Fight with terrorism

Gonzalez dismissed suggestions that Vagi's release was "timed" with Panetta's visit or the administration could "promote it as an achievement in its anti-terror campaign.

"They're happy with the working relations between our people and their in the context against terrorism in Mindanao," Gonzalez said.

He said Panetta gave Philippine officials a recently "blunt forces" around the world. "We received security on the Middle East because there are many Filipino workers there," he said.

Gonzalez said Panetta, a former California congressman, also noted that many Filipinos assist to be among his constituents.

Remonde described the meeting as "mainly a social call [that] also discussed issues of common interest on international terrorism."

He downplayed Panetta's visit as part of a "routine" trip to the Asia-Pacific region. Panetta was set to leave at 10 o'clock last night.

Media kept away

Malacañang took pains to keep Panetta out of media reach. The Palace security was spread briefly for a photo opportunity. Later, reporters were barred from conducting roadside interviews with Philippine officials who attended the meeting.

Time to his code as the United States' "chief spook," Panetta arrived quietly in the area hours of morning.

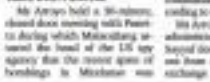
According to Cerge Remonde of the Manila International Airport Authority, the private aircraft carrying Panetta and his wife Sylvia landed at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City at around 2:15 a.m.

The arrival and departure areas were closed to media coverage upon the request of the US Embassy, according to another official, who requested not to be named for lack of authority to speak on the matter.

No information was given as to where Panetta was going next.

Diplomatic ties between the two countries came under stress after a US Marine, Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, was convicted of raping a Filipina woman in 2006. An appeals court overturned the decision only this year after the woman changed her statement.

Sensitive forces have provided weapons, intelligence and training that have helped the underfunded Philippine military since 2002 in counter-insurgency commandos and strongholds of the Abu Sayyaf bandits, an al-Qaida-linked group blacklisted by Washington as a terrorist organization. A few hundred American soldiers remain in Mindanao. With reports from AP and INP



NDF leader's visit

From page A1

in the march for peace between the government and communist rebels.

Luis Jalandoni, chair of the NDFP negotiating panel, and his wife Ma. Concepcion Ledesma arrived from the Netherlands at 9:45 a.m. to visit an ailing sister, Jalandoni's colleagues told the Inquirer.

The Jalandonis' visit followed statements from both sides expressing hope for the resumption next month of long-stalled peace negotiations to end a 40-year communist rebellion.

Reyes Mura rep. Satur Ocampo said on a phone interview that Jalandoni was in town "to visit his ailing elder sister, today 3, do la Paz."

Reached on his Facebook account, the Dutch-based Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison also said the hajoma that Jalandoni's trip was "strictly for a family visit."

"His elder sister is seriously ill. I think that he will avoid interviews with the media and any official representation of the NDFP," Sison said.

Activation of Joint

Ocampo said the visit was unrelated to the efforts to revive the peace talks although he saw the Jalandonis' "quiet return" as an "encouraging" sign for the suspended negotiations.

Jalandoni's return was made possible by the activation of the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees (Jasig) in preparation for the resumption of talks next month.

"It will most likely be held in Norway but I am in no position to say either," Ocampo said on the phone.

"That the people [have] been able to visit in private indicates that the government is keeping with its commitment to respect the Jasig and whatever arrangements for the private visit," he added.

Amsterdam meeting

Sison said an informal meeting held last month in Amsterdam between the government and the NDFP "laid the basis for the preparations of the formal talks to be held in Oslo within the second half of August."

He said the preparations included "full activation" of the Jasig to enable panelists, consultants and staffers to participate in the final preparatory meeting and the formal talks.

"Satur is under the protection of the Royal Dutch government and Dutch government. That's why he was cured in the Philippines," Sison said.

His interviews with the media were allowed by airport security personnel.

"It's a very quiet, private family visit," said lawyer Edre Olalia, an NDFP legal consultant.

Administration hopeful

Olalia said there were no plans as yet for Jalandoni to meet with members of the NDFP negotiating panel since the would be expected to spend time with his family.

Jalandoni was also in Manila in August 2004.

Administration officials has already expressed hope for the resumption of talks after the government pledged not to arrest rebel negotiators on their way to or from consultations.

Negotiations collapsed in 2004 after the New People's Army (NPA) blasted the government for its inaction on US and European listed terrorist organizations.

In 2005, the government captured the Batasan complex and arrested 97 rebel negotiators and consultants from attend during the talks and where they traveled to consult rural communities.

No criminal prosecution

Avelino Razon Jr., the presidential adviser to the talks, said last week the government would renew the Jasig starting July 17 to allow rebel negotiators and consultants to prepare for the formal talks.

The decision followed an executive in clashes between the NPA and government forces in recent months.

The immunity agreement also suspends pending criminal prosecutions against rebels involved in the talks, Razon said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the government would also no longer insist that the rebels agree to an immediate ceasefire as a condition for the resumption of negotiations.

"We are very, very hopeful," Ermita told reporters.

The rebels have spurned calls for an immediate ceasefire in the past, saying any truce has been a pause aimed a consolidated would be tantamount to a surrender of their decades-old rebellion, one of Asia's longest.

Prospects are good

Ocampo which has been hosting the negotiations, arranged an informal meeting of both sides last month in The Hague to clinch out their differences.

The 120,000-strong military has been carrying out sporadic offensives aimed at defeating the rebels before the end of how pledged before the end of her term next year. With reports from Jerome Aning and AP

Gay Filipino wins asylum in US on gender grounds

SAN FRANCISCO—A gay Filipino man has won asylum in the United States on gender-based grounds.

Philip Balcorta arrived in the US in 2005 as a visitor's visa and then filed an application for asylum.

Subsequently he filed an application for change of status to obtain a student visa, which was denied on Jan. 16; was subjected to deportation; or removal proceedings.

Balcorta, 43, was an English professor at the Technological University of the Philippines for 17 years prior to going to the US.

In his mind, he testified that he was sexually abused by older boys when he was 8 years old and again when he was 11.

At 16, he said, he was threatened with a knife by a classmate who sexually abused him several times. He said he did not report the incidents to his parents as he did not want them to know he was gay, which would have traumatized them.

He testified that he also did not report the abuse to the police as he was scared they might waste money from him by threatening to tell people, especially his parents, that he was gay, or they might abuse him themselves. He said it was well-known fact that in the Philippines the police were corrupt.

Asylum applications based on gender-related claims are rarely approved, but a team of experienced lawyers supporting gay rights had tried and failed.

"There cases are challenging and very difficult to win," said University of California law professor Karen Musalo, who is also director of the university's Center for Gender and Refugee Studies.

Balcorta was represented by human rights lawyer Jed Lagunzad, who initially did not know his client was gay.

During an interview—meeting one year after removal proceedings had been initiated, "in tears" Balcorta prompted me to ask Philip in a very respectful way if he was gay. That led him to several stories of various perpetrators that he had suffered at a gay man in the Philippines, which led to my filing a gender-based asylum defense for him," Lagunzad said.

Balcorta also had to convince the judge to consider his application despite having filed it beyond the one-year window for the filing of asylum applications from the time of entry into the US.

Lagunzad argued that the exceptions in the one-year rule applied because Balcorta had faced past persecution in the Philippines.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, July 13, 2009
15th Week in Ordinary Time
Hebrew

1st Reading: Is 1:10-14, 21
Gospel: Mt 10:34-11:1

Jesus said to his apostles: "Do not think that I have come to establish peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Each one will have as enemies those of one's own family.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me. One who seeks to benefit from his life will lose it; one who loses his life for my sake will find it.

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes him who sent me. The one who welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive the reward of a prophet; the one who welcomes a just man because he is a just man will receive the reward of a just man. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, because he is a disciple of mine, I assure you, he will not go unrewarded."

When Jesus had finished giving his twelve disciples these instructions, he went on from there to teach and to proclaim his message in their towns.

Commentary:

The kind of Egypt had become for Israel a house of bondage, when the Egyptians tried to destroy Israel by murdering their children. The Egyptians feared that the children of Israel would join their enemies and drive them out of the land. God's people had to undergo this ordeal over them, to harden them and afflict them until every manner of hardship. They became slaves in the service of the pharaoh. But, despite the fact that their lives had become bitter, the Israelites increased and multiplied.

The place where we have been happy can become a place of affliction and can become the greatest cross for us to bear. The main effects of the Cross are not what they appeared. There is no night more dreaded as a sudden person than the prosperity of the righteous. Oh sincerity, how always spread must when it was persecuted. The enemies, who attempt to destroy the Church, are busy trying to calm the rise of new righteousness in our hearts. Let those, who would escape hardship, nevertheless be afraid of sinning and sin feverishly to find for sanctuary. Our great care must be to love God and to transform our life and work into labors of love.

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Soldier killed, 3 others hurt in NPA ambush

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TURNPOS 3800 II

CBCP head pleased with chosen successor

From page A1

for the next two years, because he is a canon lawyer," Jose Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, the incumbent CBCP president, said of Bishop Bishop Soto Odchimar.

Recognizing the CBCP role as the "dominant moral force in the country," Senators Loren Legarda and Francis Escudero also hailed the election of Odchimar.

Lagdameo, who is retired of the diocese administration, also expressed confidence that Odchimar, the CBCP vice president, would make a good CBCP president.

"If I am sure he will do well as president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines," Lagdameo said on the CBCP news website.

'Kind man'

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, a former CBCP president and critic of the Arroyo administration, also attended expressed kind words for Odchimar.

Cruz said that he was praying for Odchimar's success as CBCP president.

"Let's see how he will perform. There are bishops who, when they become leaders, their views, convictions and preferences change. I also changed when I became CBCP president. Don't ask me why. It just happened," Cruz said.

Cruz has been quoted as describing Odchimar as a kind man. "This I know for having related with him for some time, especially in canonical matters," said Cruz, a canon lawyer like Odchimar.

Year of two hearts

Lagdameo also cited an affinity with the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary for Odchimar's election to the top CBCP post signified the "continuity and strength of the institution as a dominant moral force in our society."

"The CBCP has not just been spiritual pastor of the Catholic community, but it also a moral guide for the national policy" she added.

Legarda said she was hoping that the CBCP would continue its "crusade against corruption in government and civil society, against poverty and illegal drugs, and rigorously pursue the campaign for the protection and enhancement of the environment."

Sen. Francis Escudero said he wished Odchimar well in his new role as head of the bishops' conference.

"As an official of government, I am of the belief that I should not interfere in any way with the internal governance of the Church," Escudero said in an apparent jab at the Arroyo administration, which has been religiously courting the support of the bishops. — Report from Norman Bordadora and Philip C. Tubeza

LAGDAMEO

ODCHIMAR

Ating Dibdibin Program

ICANSERVE Foundation Inc. pioneers the Philippines' first and only community based breast cancer screening program called Ating Dibdibin or Take Your Breast Care To Heart.

Breast screening is the regular examination of a woman's breasts to find breast cancer early. It includes monthly self breast exam starting age 20, yearly physical examination by doctor, nurse or midwife at age 30 and mammography or breast x-ray at age 40.

Ating Dibdibin is a call to save more lives. Regular breast cancer screening can catch cancer early when it is most treatable.

The program involves partnership between ICANSERVE and a city or a locale to train its doctors, nurses, midwives, community health workers on early breast cancer detection techniques.

Together they hold public and private assemblies where they teach the residents breast self exam and give free clinical exam.

At the heart of any assembly are breast cancer survivors who inspire women to overcome their fear and the guilt of taking charge of their health. The survivors also help patients navigate their way through recovery.

Launched in June 2008, the pilot project is Imelda City. The program is under the auspices of the American Cancer Society and Pfizer Foundation USA and Pfizer Philippines.

The Philippines has the highest incidence of breast cancer in Southeast Asia. ICANSERVE responds through Ating Dibdibin.

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National Breast Cancer Screening Program

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City Hall, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Name of Project	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time Time		Time and/or Venue for Submission/ Opening of Bids
		Deadline	Deadline Opening of Bids	
1. Site Development / Construction of Community Multi-Purpose Building, Material Recovery Facility, Materials Recovery Facility and Solid Waste Management Facility (Sta. Catalina)	P3,247,000.00	Aug 03, 2009 10:00 a.m.	Aug. 3, 2009 10:00 a.m.	P3,000.00

Interested Bidders must submit their duly accomplished application, BIR's accomplished Eligibility Documents on or before the deadline of date and time indicated. Documentary Requirements and Bidding Documents shall be issued to qualified contractors. Bidders are encouraged to attend the pre-bid conference on the date and time indicated above.

The City Government of Zamboanga reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject at any time prior to the award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

ENGR. ANGEL S. ARRIOLA
Bids Chairman

Experts see bigger eruption by Mayon

By Roy N. Mabasa
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—VOLCANOLOGISTS FEAR a possibly bigger eruption by Mayon Volcano compared to its 2006 explosion.

Resident volcanologist Eduardo Laguerta pointed the scenario at yesterday's meeting of the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council and municipal and city mayors on preparedness for the eruption of Mayon.

During the meeting, he described the possible scenarios once the volcano awakens to restiveness while Gov. Joey Salceda and Cedric Daep, Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office chief, presented the response mechanism to ensue if an actual eruption.

'Degassing'

Laguerta explained that they based a big explosion because of the relatively low "degassing" manifestations of Mayon.

"In 2006, there was more sulfur dioxide emission that degassed the magma underneath and by the time the magma reached the summit it just flowed out to the flanks of him without an explosion. But the current characteristics are different and we are closely monitoring them," he told the reporters.

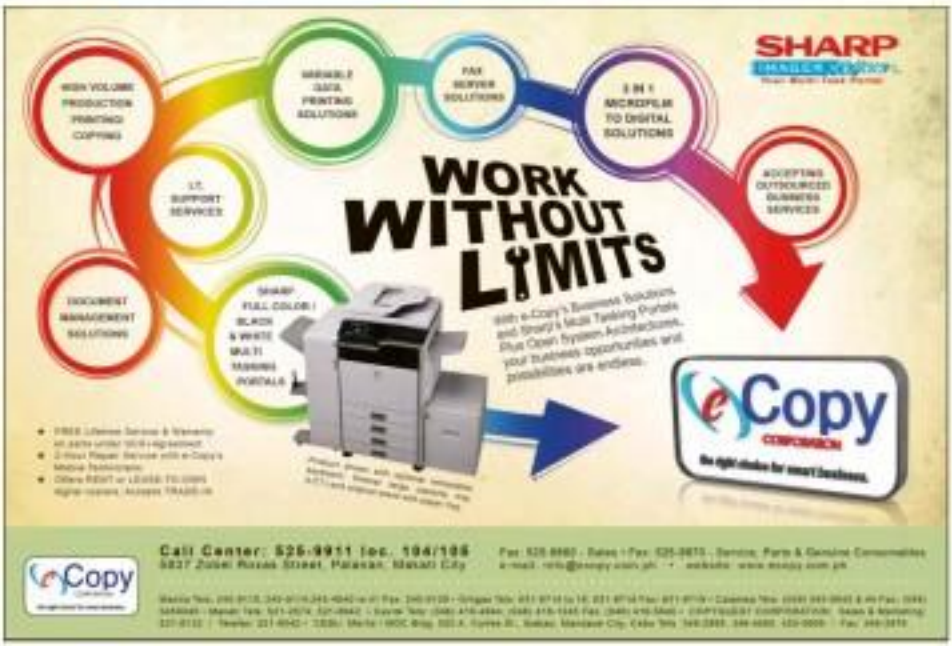
Alert level 2

Based on yesterday's Mayon bulletin issued by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), the volcano showed occasional steadiness steaming activity since the alert level was raised to 2 last Friday.

Three volcanic quakes were recorded in the past 24 hours while the crater glow was obscured by thick clouds that covered Mayon's summit.

Laguerta said the alert level was raised to 2 after an aerial survey conducted last week showed a mound of fresh lava formation at the crater, which signifies magma ascension up the volcano edifice.

"The same magma formation is the bright crater glow reason that is very visible during nighttime, even to the naked eye," he said.



Fr. Reuter's Sta. Ana home made a historical landmark

By Tina G. Santos

THE MANILA CITY COUNCIL has declared Xavier House of the Society of Jesus in Sta. Ana, Manila, a historical landmark, further squelching speculation that it would be torn down and turned into a shopping mall.

Xavier House, home to many retired Jesuit priests—including people joined icon Fr. James Reuter—was a breakout hub during the 1986 Edsa Revolution.

Under a new city council ordinance, the property, located on Pedro Gil Street a few meters from the Sta. Ana Church and the main square, Plaza Felipe Calderon, will be placed under the preservation and conservation program of the Manila Historical and Heritage Commission.

The city engineer's office was directed not to issue demolition permits on the property.

"All plans and specifications for future construction, repair and renovation of the Xavier House structure should pass prior approval from the Manila Historical and Heritage Commission before any building or renovation permit may be issued by the city engineer's office," the ordinance says.

Apart from its historical significance in the country, what is remarkable about the 19th century structure, adjacent main entrance from the Pasig River, is its grandiose architecture. Its walls are made of adobe stones and its floor is laid with decorative tiles coupled with rustic wooden panels, the city ordinance pointed out.

"There is a need to protect such a noteworthy structure from any attempt to defile or demolish it in the name of commercial development, hence, maintaining its chronological importance as part of Sta. Ana's historical district," said Councilor Danilo Victor Lacuna Jr., adding that its preservation was "most imperative and highly justified."

Radyo Bandido

During the 1986 People Power revolt, Reuter set up and directed the "Radyo Bandido" broadcasts that bolstered the Filipino's courage to overthrow the 20-year Marcos dictatorship, he said.

It was when Reuter's chosen wasteland up an unlicensed radio station to broadcast to the rest of the world informed about the popular uprising.

There were rumors of the sale of Xavier House a small developer earlier this year due to the religious society's reported financial difficulties. Reuter, now frail and in his 90s, was quoted in a published interview as saying that he did not want to leave what he had lived in for over 40 years, and that "the memorial that the Jesuits have in Xavier House was worth more than the money."

The society later clarified that there was never a "done deal" to sell the property to mall developer SM, which had earlier bought a neighboring lot. The society also indicated at mid-midterm its decision was based on financial gain and that it was not taking care of the well-loved Reuter.

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Doctors return to barrios under FG program

WHEN "BAGONG Doktor Para sa Bayan" was launched in 2008 by the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, the program aroused mixed ripples, if not skepticism.

Arroyo, who was afflicted with a rare heart condition, had a close brush with death. Instead of consulting foreign doctors or going abroad to seek medical care, he opted to have a team of Filipino doctors led by Dr. Rommel Cacho perform the delicate surgery on his heart.

So, thanksgiving and recognition of the Filipino doctor's medical and surgical skills, Arroyo established a scholarship program to support financially engaged doctors.

The program received interest in its earlier program of former Health secretary and Sen. Juan Flavier that urged doctor to serve in the barrios. That project reached swamping and a dedicated philanthropic sponsor.

The result was the First Doctors Foundation Inc. project, to subsidize stint with Flavier and in partnership with the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH), Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM) and West Visayas State University.

The program has three parts. Initially, Bagong Doktor Para sa Bayan will support medical students in their last two years of medical school and once the medical board exams, in order, the graduates will work—for, ideally after being board certified—for two straight years in places selected by the Department of Health.

In the second part, it aims the new doctors who will want to undertake served and for thing barrios with special medical kits.

In May 2009, FGFI presented in this batch of scholars, numbering 100, who are now barrio doctors. Today on its fourth year, the program is assisting another 80 scholars. By 2010, it will have retained 180 scholars.

By 2007, DOH started the third part of the program called "Bagong Espesyalisang Doktor Para sa Bansa."

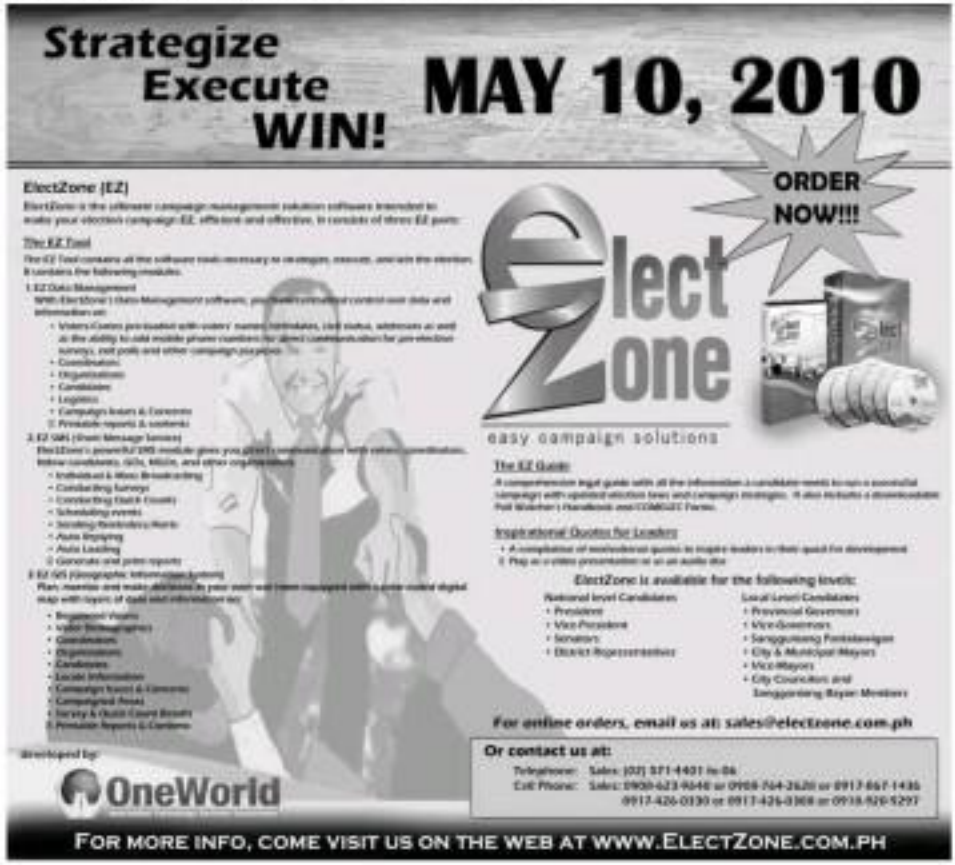
This part provides financial support to enhanced sub-specialty fellows who need to train in any of the top 10 mortality diseases in the Philippines, namely, heart disease, tuberculosis, pneumonia, cerebrovascular ailments, cancers, accidents, pneumonia, tuberculosis, diseases caused by ill-defined and unknown causes, chronic lower respiratory diseases, diabetes, and renals conditions originating in the perinatal period.

PGH trains the fellows for one to two years and the DOH places them to regional medical centers, where they are integrated for continuing learning and teaching opportunities.

The first batch of fellows are Doctors Sheila Lim, Louis Ma. Aclendel Agnisolda, Cindy Concha-Gaga, Ramona Abat, Gay Udali, Maita Jayne Magdaleno and Rachelle Perez.

The second batch of fellows are Jacqueline N. Ma, Sigrid T. Aguirre, Jesa D. Alcaraz, Ma. Theresa Garcia-Reyes, Thaddeus Jose R. Bayona, Richard Mark O. Bel-la, Leslie Ilap B. Jiao, Josephine M. de la Cerna, Grace Apolinario S. Gonzales, Maridel Ortiz-Gonzaga, Charice B. Hidau, Angelo Steve C. Javier, Maria Ofelia R. Pablo, Mirella F. Pallaca, Cherie Grace G. Quingking, Grace D. Quipanis, Julie M. Resurreccion, Vito I. Sanzonia, Jennadee C. Sueno, Rocina H. Tinaco, Andrea Dorothy S. Valle, Marie Hazelene S. Velasquez, Jerome F. Ybiraglodi, and Eugene Y. Yu.

THE FIRST BATCH of eight "Espesyalisang Doktor Para sa Bayan" is shown with First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, Dr. Carmela Adlan, FGFI chair; UP-PGH Chancellor Dr. Ramon Arnaldo, former Sen. Juan Flavier, Jorge Udangan-Salmon, FGFI president; Dr. Eleanor Gabriel, dean of the PLM College of Medicine; and Dr. Kenneth Ronquillo of the DOH.



S. No. 3137
H. No. 6049

Republic of the Philippines

Congress of the Philippines

Metro Manila
Fourteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-eighth day of July two thousand eight.

[Republic Act No. 9647]

AN ACT DESIGNATING THE PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY AS THE COUNTRY'S NATIONAL CENTER FOR TEACHER EDUCATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SEC. 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Normal University Modernization Act of 2009".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to give priority to the continuing professional training and development of all Filipino teachers and, optimize the potentials of the country's teaching force to increase access to, promote equity in, and improve the quality of basic and higher education. The State shall likewise give priority to studies in education with emphasis on innovations and alternative systems and their articulation and application to teacher training and development.

SEC. 3. National Center for Teacher Education. – The Act designates the Philippine Normal University (PNU) as the National Center for Teacher Education. As such, the PNU, in addition to the powers and functions provided for in its charter, shall perform the following:

(a) Provide technical support to the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in their programs and propose vital short-term policies and recommendations on teacher training, teacher education, continuing professional education of teachers and academic supervision, and teacher education curricula;

(b) Build and develop a database of education policies to serve as a resource to the country's policymakers;

(c) Conduct researches, case studies, and other appropriate methodologies to enhance curriculum and learning designs for teacher training, teacher education, and continuing professional education of teachers and academic supervisory; and

(d) As may be directed by Congress, provide assistance to legislators in the design and analyses of legislative proposals concerning teacher training, teacher education, continuing professional education of teachers and academic supervisors, teacher education curricula, and other issues affecting teacher education.

SEC. 4. Teacher Education Standards Development. – As the National Center for Teacher Education, the PNU shall make an annual presentation to the DepEd, CHED, the House and Senate Committees on Education, and other education institutions on its proposed standards in teacher training, teacher education, continuing professional education of teachers and academic supervisors, and teacher education curricula. Such presentation shall be made available to the general public especially to teachers and academic supervisors. The presentation shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

(a) Necessary competencies of teachers and academic supervisors in their various fields of specialization;

(b) Innovative strategies and alternative modalities of teaching and learning; and

(c) Information and communication technology breakthroughs to assist the process of teaching and learning.

SEC. 5. Education Policy Research and Development. – As the National Center for Teacher Education, the PNU shall establish an Education Policy Research and Development Office which shall:

(a) Establish and maintain a database of education policies and significant issues facing the country's education system as well as the education systems of other countries especially in the Asia Pacific region;

(b) Create and test different models of teacher education, address key factors in successful teacher education programs and determine which model would best achieve the country's education goals;

(c) Provide a systematic dissemination of research output on teacher education to make them readily available to end users such as teachers and academic supervisors;

(d) Make broad expertise and competence in education research with other Teacher Education Institutions throughout the country: Provided, That the research funding in other state universities and colleges shall be for such amount allocated by the government for that year;

(e) Advise the country's policy makers and decision makers in planning, implementing and evaluating reforms in teacher education including the licensing or professionalization;

(f) Assist in the assessment of government programs on education. As such, PNU may be requested by any government agency to comment and/or make recommendations regarding the different policies and programs on education; and

(g) Conduct periodic studies to aid in crafting responsive and programs on education.

SEC.6. Philippine Normal University Modernization Program.The PNU shall prepare a modernization plan to fulfill its mandate as the National Center for Teacher Education, and to upgrade its capability to provide the service and in service formation for our country's teachers.

The modernization shall enhance current development programs to make them relevant, responsive to the needs of society and address the educational needs of communities. The plan should also include a program for staff development as well as for the upgrading of services, facilities and equipments in the university.

The proposed modernization plan shall be submitted to the University's Board of Regents for their approval.

SEC.7. Tax Exemptions. The provisions of any general or special law to the contrary notwithstanding:

(a) All revenues and assets of the PNU used actually, directly and exclusively for educational purposes or to support thereof shall be exempt from all taxes and duties;

(b) Gifts and donations of real and personal and personal properties of all kinds shall be exempt from the donor's tax and the same shall be considered an allowable deduction from the gross income of the donor, in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended: Provided, That the allowable deduction shall be equivalent to one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the value of such donation. Valuation of assistance other than money shall be based on the acquisition cost or property. Such valuation shall take into consideration the depreciated value of property in case said property has been used;

(c) Importation of souvenirs, technical, vocational, scientific, philanthropic, historical and cultural books, supplies and materials duly certified by the Board, including scientific and educational computer software equipment, shall be exempt from the customs duties;

(d) The university shall only pay zero percent (0%) value added tax for all transactions subject to this tax; and

(e) All academic revenues/assets shall be exempt from taxes.

SEC. 8. Appropriations. – The amount of Two hundred fifty million pesos (P250,000,000.00) necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act is hereby appropriated/currently for capital outlay to additions to the current year's appropriations of PNU.

For the succeeding two (2) years, the amount of One hundred million pesos (P100,000,000.00) shall be appropriated per year in addition to the annual appropriations for capital outlay of the PNU.

Thereafter, the amount necessary to sustain the programs shall be included in the annual appropriations of the PNU.

SEC. 9. Separability Clause. – If any part, section or provisions of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or other issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved:

PROSPERO C. NOGRALES
Speaker of the House
of Representatives

JUAN PONCE ENRILE
President of the Senate

This Act which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 3137 and House Bill No. 6049 was finally passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on April 27, 2009 and May 5, 2009, respectively.

MARILYN B. BARUA-YAP
Secretary General
House of Representatives

EMMA LIRIO-REYES
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: June 10 2009

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President of the Philippines

PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY

The Country's National Center for Teacher Education by virtue of R.A. 9647

The Philippine Normal University acknowledges with gratitude the support of the principal authors who made possible the passage of R.A. 9647, otherwise known as the PNU Modernization Act of 2009. In the Senate, we would like to thank Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Nene Pimentel, Jinggoy Estrada, Mar Roxas, Ed Angara, Miga Zubiri, Allan Cayetano and the Members of the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture and Finance; in the House of Representatives, Speaker Prospero Nograles, and Representatives Ompong Plaza, Cynthia Villar, Rufus Rodriguez, Sonny Escudero, and Crispin Remulla; and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

LUTGARDO B. BARBO
President

CALL FOR THIRD-PARTY EXPERT ASSESSMENT OF SAFETY & POLLUTION CONTROL AT PANDACAN DEPOT

We at Chevron, Petron and Shell, who operate the Pandacan oil depots through the joint venture Pandacan Depot Services, Inc., are calling for an independent evaluation by a third-party risk assessor of the safety and the pollution control measures of our facilities in Pandacan.

We can confidently assert that Pandacan depots exceed international and Philippine standards on safety and pollution control, but we recognize that the communities around the facility and other stakeholders would want this to be corroborated by a reputable and independent body.

We are willing to shoulder the expenses for this assessment provided that the risk assessor is among the global top 10 in this field, in order to ensure their competence and credibility.

Since 2002, we have taken extra steps to reassure the residents around the Pandacan terminal by scaling down our operations (removal of LPG storage and reduction of other fuel storage tanks) and creating a green buffer zone.

Beyond these, Chevron, Petron and Shell each have their own separate initiatives to further scale down Pandacan operations. Petron, for example, is in the process of identifying alternative sites where it can relocate portions of its jet fuel storage operations. This comes as a result of Petron's commitment to both the Mayor of Manila and to his Eminence Cardinal Rosales that it will reduce the concentration of its inventory facilities in Pandacan.

To move this proposal forward, we will send separate invitations to key stakeholders, including the national government, Manila City Hall, the Catholic Church, and safety and environmental experts to be part of a Multi-sectoral Assessment Panel that will oversee the selection of the risk assessor and monitor the assessment process and its findings.

We hope that the third-party assessment will lay all the issues to rest by providing an objective and fact-based evaluation of the Pandacan depots' safety and environment management systems. The public deserves to know.

Chevron

PETRON
Fuel Success.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Day One

TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF EUGENIO Vagni's life—and for once that trite phrase is burdened with meaning. It is truly his first day, for he is, once again, a free man. The International Committee of the Red Cross engineer was released by his abductors yesterday, after six months in harrowing captivity, considerably thinner and visibly weaker but, by most accounts, healthy enough and in good spirits.

EDITORIALS

He told reporters in Zamboanga City before taking a flight to Manila, that he did not think the day of his release would ever come. "I was thinking that it will never happen."

Earlier, on the flight from Jolo to Zamboanga, the 61-year-old Italian explained what kept him going through the unspeakable ordeal. "The will is to see my family, to see my wife and my daughter," he added. "This gives you big strength because you know that your family is there waiting for you ... You adapt to the situation. You have no choice, and you survive everything."

His words are moving, because they testify to the strength of spirit that makes endurance possible—and prove that the inhumanity of his captors did not brutalize him.

But how did he come to find himself abandoned by his kidnappers in a remote location in Malabang town in Jolo yesterday morning? The best answer is: A confluence of different factors led to his release.

It is important to remember, because we can only recover from the trauma of another high-profile international kidnapping and prevent another one if we claim the right lessons, from his release as well as from the earlier releases of Swiss Andreas Notter on April 10, Filipino Eugenio Vagni on April 30, and Swiss Andreas Notter on April 10.

Military pressure in various areas played a part, especially in terms of limiting the Abu Sayyaf bandits' scope of operation. But we must a fuller tapestry into the relatively limited military offensives played. Negotiations were a key part; the participation of local officials with their ears to the ground may have proved essential. But the supposed "prisoner swap," with the government trading the two wives of Abu Sayyaf leader Alhabsi Parad expedited by arrested at a military checkpoint a few days ago, for Vagni, needs to be examined closely.

The "hostage" has civil-rights implications not only for relatives of Abu Sayyaf members, but for any citizen of the republic. It may have worked—again, the details need to be explained—but we should beware of the consequences of expediency.

Day 40

TOMORROW MARKS THE 40TH DAY SINCE THE murder of Zamora leader Ka Rose Pelias. His friends in Akbayan have called on those whose lives Nong Rose (short for "Manong," or elder brother) had touched, including the nationwide community of agitation and supporters that sprang into being through the Sumilao farmers' ultimately successful struggle for land, to remember him and the cause he fought for. "To life Nong Rose was a militant, brilliant and courageous peasant leader who struggled for the land of the Sumilao Farmers and other farmers, an inspiring figure in the struggle for the reform and extension of CARP," in death Ka Rose has become an icon of the continuing struggle for agrarian reform.

Pelias died soon after hearing that the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (a Carper 3rd) had passed Congress. He was in Surallah, Cotabato when the news of the passage of HB 4077 arrived. He told family and friends: "Walang sa 'tin! [We have won!]" He was shot to death, by still unidentified persons, two days later.

From experience, we know it will be extremely difficult to identify and eventually punish those who killed a poor man like Pelias and those who ordered the killing. The temptation among his fellow farmers in Surallah and his now-national constituency of agrarian reform advocates and supporters may be to be consumed by revenge or frustrated by the lack of progress; and yet, from what we can see, there is very little of that. Those Pelias walked with, on the road to meaningful agrarian reform, would rather remember the life he led, and be inspired by it. Tomorrow, 40 days after his death, is a good day to start.

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Drug, oil cartels control RP market

THE TROUBLE WITH OUR PHARMACEUTical industry is not that prices of medicines here are more than double those in other countries but that the industry is controlled by a cartel. The foreign-owned pharmaceutical companies control 88 percent of the market. One foreign-owned factory turns out most of the foreign brands of medicine. One company, Unilab, also foreign-owned, does most of the distribution. And one drug store chain, Mercury, does most of the retailing. That is why the price comparisons can dictate the prices of their medicine, which are obscenely high. The mother companies abroad dictate the prices and the policy to Filipino executives will tell you. "Print the drugs or high as the market will bear."

It is strange that until now, Congress has not passed an anti-trust law to prevent the existence of cartels when it is clear that we have cartels in different industries, be it in oil, steel, rice, medicine, etc.

The Cheaper Medicines Act and the Oil Deregulation Law were enacted to lower the prices of medicine and fuel but they have not addressed the root of the problem: the cartels. Many of our business problems would be solved by a no-nonsense anti-trust law. I wonder why none of our many legislators have dropped or introduced one when there are so many reports from the US and other countries to learn from.

Cartels and big business companies have lobby groups to lobby individual legislators against passing bills that would reduce their profit. And when it is evident that a certain bill is sure to be passed, they smuggle substitute bills or amendments or provisions that would provide loopholes in the original bill.

That seems what happened to the Oil Deregulation Law. The oil cartel smuggled amendments and new provisions into the original bill that watered it down. One example is "predatory pricing." It prohibits any company from pricing its products much lower than the competition. What regulates competition is about offering your products in the public at better prices. That has now obviously inserted to the oil cartel.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Another example is the elimination of price controls during the transition period, the time when new companies are freeing their muscles to compete with the established oil giants. Deregulation would be ineffective if there is no real competition. Price controls are necessary during this transition period so that the establishment will not continue taking advantage of full deregulation to increase their prices at will.

Another feature of an effective deregulation law is an open-ended transition period during which there are price controls. But the oil cartel succeeded in making the deregulation have a force by forcing President Fidel V. Ramos during an executive order limiting the transition period to three months. Now we are reaping the wholehearted of those mistakes. That is why our fuel prices are way above what is fair. Instead of competing with the Big Three, the new companies merely follow their pricing. Some of them source their refined petroleum products from the Big Three, acting as mere retailers of its products. How can they price their products lower than their supplier?

That is what is happening to the Cheaper Medicines Act. Unable to prevent its passage, the pharmaceutical cartel is now trying to punch holes into it to water it down.

The law mandates the President to issue an executive order listing the maximum retail prices (MRP) of 321 of the most essential medicines. Health Secretary Francisco Duque has passed the list to EO5. The cartel is trying to prevent his from issuing the MRPs.

In exchange for the MRPs, it offered to eat certain losses in its own prices. This is a trick.

In the first place, if it can lower its prices, it means that their medicines are overpriced. And if it is willing to cut prices, why is it against price control? Because it has a way to gimmick its losses.

You must have seen the full-page advertisements of the giant multinational drug firm Pfizer promoting a supposed cold- cure which offers a 10 percent discount to senior patients on its expensive prescription drugs. Question: Why are the multinationals against the MRPs—which the law mandates should be at least 10 percent of present prices—when they are willing to voluntarily cut their prices by 10 percent? (The ads said, by the way, were rejected by Mercury, an indication of the relationship between the multinationals and the drug retail chain.)

The catch of the cold card is this: You get a discount only if you buy Pfizer products. Therefore, Pfizer gets a captive market. The other multinationals must likely will adopt this gimmick.

What is its advantage? It would entice patients to buy the medicines of the multinationals instead of the generics manufactured by Filipino drug firms. The prices are the same anyway the reasoning would go. But that would effectively kill not only the generic drug stores but also the local pharmaceutical firms. With their core of business, the multinationals would no longer have any competition and they can phase out the cold card and raise prices again. Clever, eh?

Not only that. The Pfizer cold card scheme allows it to access and store patient information and market its prescription drugs directly to them. Members of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) have objected to this scheme because of orchestrated issues marketing prescription drugs directly to patients or takers in the industry here and abroad. But if the other multinationals are allowed to adopt the same gimmick, the objection would no doubt vanish.

Will she do it?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE'S A QUIX LITERAL BLAST FROM THE past.

It was the evening of Sept. 1, 1972, a Sunday, and most of the items in Carlitos Log just closed. Everyone was hurrying to eat their last dinner from work, or from shopping. There, suddenly at half past eight, the entrance of Joe's Department Store let out a loud roar and most definitely hung in all directions. A woman's cries was stunned.

Then it was as if it were Judgment Day and the world (into the pandemic) the face was torn to off, making her completely unrecognizable. She died three and three. Forty-one other people were wounded and brought to the hospital, some of them critical—although they eventually managed to pull through. The bomb Nene—which it was—left a gaping hole where a wall and a door used to be, and it left a city in shock.

It was a good thing, the newspapers would say later, that it was a Sunday and time other payday. Or else more people might have died or gotten wounded. Less than three weeks later, Marcos declared martial law.

Joe de Venecia says he is certain OMA will stay on and probably do the same thing. Well, he is not entirely wrong about it even if he is to a fetish. He was wrong in how, once the next the best person to turn to. It not be him and Pilar Ramos, the two people who were deluded enough to imagine they could control the uncontrollable, we would not have to deal with the thing he is assuming no alone. If married law was Marcos, he and Nene will have to take a good deal of the blame for it.

Limited have no doubts that OMA is resolved to stay and have been saying so all these years. Those who think OMA is now washing set on retire plan to resign from office are living in a dream nature. For greater fear is not being prosecuted, it is losing out of power. In my lifetime, I have not seen anyone other than Marcos who enjoyed power that badly. For fools of them, power is not a means to an end, it is the end. The acquisition of it, the consolidation of it, the continuation of it, is everything. It's like a miser's need for money: The thrill, or fulfillment, of it does not lie in the using, it lies in the having.

The idea of self-preservation means nothing to people who equate self with power. Whose sense of meaning, whose self-worth, whose defining characteristics is power. I suspect that between Marcos and Gloria, the latter has the deeper need for it. She has people around her to love her, she can ignore the demons, the infernals all the slights that have somehow seep in her life you're imagined. She hates that, she is touching. She has an meaning, she knows she, she has an self. Rome that is more becoming.

As they were emanating the river, the reception hit the incoming on whose back it had been sitting. "Why did we do that?" the confused groaned, "now we'll both demise!" "Aha," said the assertion, "but it is in my name to have."

Because they are the only ones in power, because they are the only ones who can remove them, the government has of course put the blame unceremoniously on the MILF and the al-Qaida, without bothering to explain why so does one would want to throw Metro Manila in a state of chaos on the eve of her departure. Gilbert Teodoro, who gets an air of wanting to be president, even if he has absolutely no chances of winning, which makes you suspect a Palace mere mere—my deepest apologies to the MILF and al-Qaida—has just ordered the AFP to search the bombers people missed. The public should have no problem pointing him in the right direction, if he's interested.

The bombings share common characteristics with the ones that pestered the country in the weeks before martial law. Like them, the bombings have targeted Mindanao already before the fateful day. Like them the bombings were loud and attention-getting. Like them the bombs were placed in places that were guaranteed to produce low casualties. The logic being to make people more fearful than furious. And of course to set the case for things spinning out of control.

So, I have no doubts about GMA wanting to stay and doing everything in her power to do so. What I have a doubt about is her declaring martial law.

Let us be clear: I have no doubt that GMA will use force to achieve her goal. But I doubt she will impose the kind of martial law Marcos did, the kind that put the military in charge of government. I've advanced my arguments for that in previous columns. Suffice it to say here that she is not so much unlike Marcos in that she is not control the military, she controls only some key people there. GMA's talents do not lie in the politics of intimidation, they lie in the politics of calculation. She is past master at manipulating political theater, knowing to just the ability to sense just people. She can, and will, declare under a titular government. She can't under, and will be deceived to be, a military government.

Her best bet is to use the bombings, and other apparent signs of a slide to anarchy and or more, to declare a declare a state of emergency. That would last just long enough to earn through Duterte charge and shift the country to parliamentary rule, a platitude for it could be held sideward, producing the same spectacular results Marcos got by it. Marcos did... the machinery to send the vote a lot place with the Comelec's current of automated elections. That is the same machinery that will allow her to vote as Pangasinan representative to a unitary Batasan under a parliamentary system. Then she would be elected by her party, the biggest one in the country, the Lakas-Kampi-Cmd-ber-minority.

I have little doubt GMA will try this. The only question is: Will she succeed?

She has three factors that may have the last word. The best laid plans of mice and women have a way of going astray.

But that is another story, best left for tomorrow.

What is martial law? (1)

SOUNDING BOARD
Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

TWO DECADES AGO AT A FORUM IN THESE pages (Inquirer.net), Atty. Pacifico Agabin, a young pol, in all innocence, asked, What is martial law? Is it worse than the present government? I shall try to answer only the first question.

What is obvious to me now is that many young people, even among the current crop of law students, have only a hazy notion, only barest hint or idea of what happened during the period of martial law. They hear about it mentioned by their elders, but they wonder what it all means. So, what is martial law?

The answer to the question understood under the 1935 and 1973 Constitutions can be boiled to theory and in practice. But under the 1987 Constitution, the answer can only be in theory, although there are rumors about it being put into practice in answer to the current spate of bombings in Mindanao.

Whether under the 1935, 1973 or 1987 Constitutions, however, martial law is essentially police power. This is because its concern is "public safety" when this is threatened by invasion or rebellion. What is peculiar about martial law as police power, however, is that, whereas police power is normally a function of the legislature exercised by the police power of the state, under martial law, police power is exercised by the executive with the aid of the military and in place of "ordinary government agencies which let the time being are unable to cope with existing conditions in a locality which remains subject to the sovereignty."

Martial law authorizes "the military to act especially for the maintenance of an orderly civil government." It is "the exercise of the power which resides in the executive branch of the government to preserve order and insure the public safety in times of emergency, when other branches of the government are unable to function, or when functioning would itself threaten the public safety ... It is the law of necessity to be prescribed and administered by the executive power by object, the preservation of the public safety and good order, unless its scope, which will vary with the circumstances and necessities of the case."

Martial law in police power, therefore, is a flexible concept. It depends on two limited factors: (1) the existence of invasion or rebellion, and (2) the requirements of public safety. Necessity creates the conditions for martial law and at the same time limits the scope of martial law. Certainly the conditions created by a state of invasion would be different from those created by rebellion. Necessarily therefore, the degree and kind of repressive measures authorized to meet the varying kinds and degrees of emergency cannot be dictated under all conditions. They can only be analogous.

When one speaks of analogy one must necessarily speak of a common denominator. What is the common denominator of varying degrees and kinds of exercise of martial law during times of war? The question must be answered in the context of the system of separation of powers. And the answer is this: the common denominator of all exercise of martial law powers is the transfer by the executive officer of the discretion and judgment normally exercised by a legislative or judicial body. The variable in the various forms of martial law powers is the extent to which the executive assumes legislative and judicial functions. This variable is determined by the necessities of the moment. The executive case is the assumption of one man with the power of life and death, arrest powers and raid, but alike in a given area of actual war. In this extreme case, the executive officer is fully laws maker, judge, and executor all rolled into one.

What happened during martial law under the 1935 and 1973 Constitutions? A follow-up question is: How did the Supreme Court allow martial law to operate?

It will be recalled that on Sept. 21, 1972, President Ferdinand E. Marcos, by Proclamation No. 1081, placed the entire Philippines under martial law. This was followed by an Order creating the Department of Public Information, the former absorbing your regulatory agencies or orders issued to him. Still other actions followed which amounted to the assumption by the President of extensive legislative powers. Military courts were established with jurisdiction over civilians.

How did the Supreme Court react? In 1971 the Supreme Court legitimized the actions of the President. It ruled that: (1) the martial law proclamation of 1972 was validly made on the basis of an existing rebellion, (2) the imposition of martial law carried with it the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, (3) the martial law proclamation could legislate on any matter related to the welfare of the nation; (4) he could create military tribunals and confer on them jurisdiction to try civilians for crimes related to the purpose of martial rule; (5) in the absence of any other operative constitutional limit he could even impose the death penalty; and (6) in the absence of any martial claims of denial of a speedy trial were unavailing and that the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus also carried with it the suspension of the right to bail.

Finally, on Jan. 17, 1981, on the eve of the first visit of Pope John Paul II to the Philippines (but not *propter quod*, it was said), martial law was lifted by proclamation (No. 2045). But not really. If the heart of martial law is the concentration of governmental powers in the hands of the executive, the equivalent of martial law remained in force in all essential ways as the consequence of Amendment No. 6 of 1976 which granted full legislative power to the President.

(Next week, martial law in the 1987 Constitution.)

Here we go again

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO
Nassefa Mantafa

ON A COLD RAINY DAY OVER A WEEK AGO, the members of the Mindanao Solidarity Network left the warmth and comfort of their homes to come to the hills listed to the rain, among many other concerns, the massive outbreak of violence in Mindanao, especially the welfare of the civilians, particularly the internally displaced persons (IDPs).

According to Marites Gangoso-Africa, convenor of The Peacemakers Circle, the Network is composed of Eleno Bimalo-based NGOs collaborating to support grassroots peace initiatives and to address conflict issues.

Karen Taliudo, co-convenor of the consortium of 12 NGOs that have signed up so far, said that the MSN plans to be longer-term action, consolidating and expanding the national capital region peace solidarity for Mindanao groups.

Ecumenical Bishops Forum would remain a listener without her real probability a whole slew of tensions ending to infinity, and that her coming State of the Nation Address would be the last, thank God, hassles expected in her term in Mindanao and in Sulu.

Right after which, like a badly written script pulled out right from our nightmares, the usual suspects are named, depending on who and on which side the finger-pointers are: the military, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, their "renegade groups," the "lost commands," the Abu Sayyaf, the Jemaah Islamiyah, etc.

Then, like a bad dream, the government sets off in usual reactionary measures, checkpoints sprout up, soldiers and police are deployed everywhere. It would truly strike fear in the hearts of the uninitiated.

Of course we have seen this scenario so many times before, and it is in very predictability that demoralizes, even as it brings to life once again the worst of our fears.

Such fears are aggravated by the reactions of the various sectors who feel themselves helpless against whatever diabolical manoeuvrings from the forces of darkness, and simply call or text radio programs if only to express what they feel.

Usually in language not fit to print, they condemn Mr. Arroyo for her presidency and directly or indirectly are pledging support to counter what she can; they condemn the military for carrying out the orders of their generals who have all been bought by Mr. Arroyo, they condemn the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf and, unfortunately, the Muslims too, even proposing that Mindanao be made into all the ways for the never-ending problems it is giving the nation.

Instead we are to all these that even the analytical assessments—the wholesome and the whys—of these humanitarian incidents have been reduced to one sentence.

The result: the average caller against God-are and eliminate "political science" that may disturb Mr. Arroyo's State of the Nation Address, or be a prelude to the re-election scenario that will pave the way for the term extension of this tyranny and her cohorts.

And for the why of it, well, the Moros want an independent state, the Lumad want their ancestral domain, government, the military wants more money; the politicians want more money; and Mr. Arroyo wants to be prime minister (or queen) for life.

In the meantime, innocent civilians are blown to smithereens, families are uprooted from their homes, crops are ruined before the harvest, children are forced to drop out of school and the specter of death, whether of the body or the soul or both, pervades the land.

And so we have groups and organizations like the Mindanao Solidarity Network, the Silsilah and many other just-peace-minded organizations that have been working for peace in the wider sense of it all, who try to answer the questions.

But there is one question that only Mr. Arroyo can answer: in the end, is it really worth all that?

* * *

Comments to nafpal@yahoo.com

The next proconsul

THE LONG VIEW
Manuel L. Quezon III

THERE WILL, UNDOUBTEDLY BE A LOT OF smirking around for signs concerning Washington's message to the President in the arms of Cinderella Leon Panetta's Palace visit yesterday. Before the smirkers, let us say, let us remember a couple of much-concerning Washington's incursions and he banned the latter by profit pushing the Palace's statement that it was an ordinary meeting. To be sure, the Palace was forced to react to a scoop by The Daily Tribune which first broke the story of Panetta's visit, subsequently fleshed out by the Philippine Star which prides itself on its being in the know as far as the US Embassy and Malacañang, too are concerned.

The Press Secretary stated cryptic: "The visit is self-evidently related to the ongoing war on terror and the fight against bombings here—we're in it together"—blathered Gregg Bernardo, adding that it was upon the request of the Americans and what's more, was scheduled a month ago. Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro or Ayly's confused himself out of the loop, saying he didn't know the agenda, and expressed belief that it would only be courtesy call just with no knowing or preparing for such a high-level visit. But then Bernardo was contradicted by the DFA's own spokesman, Ed Malaya, who did say it was purely a "courtesy call" but that "the visit is mandated to remain developments in Mindanao."

Panetta's visit, unbeknownst to Bernardo formed the meeting in terms of an unfortunately planned summary by Joseph Mussomeli—remember him? Formerly of the American Embassy in Manila and now detailed to Afghanistan, he said that Mindanao is a "theory" for terrorists and might just be—Mussomeli's words, not mine—the "next proconsul." Mussomeli wouldn't "share say much a thing without a go-signal from the State Department."

According to Bernardo, a month ago, when US Defense Secretary Robert Gates visited the Philippines, the subject of Mindanao and terrorism remained more in terms of development, the military component being limited to "intelligence sharing, training and equipping." In that context, a Panetta visit coming on the heels of Gates' visit to the talks and monitoring the terror spot. Which is precisely what's piqued interest in Panetta's Sunday stopover: the bombings in Jolo changed the situation on the ground.

The shareable understanding is that the GRP, to there the state of things a month ago, while the Americans are ready to help, would not like to see a direct US military involvement in the fight against terrorism in Mindanao.

But Bernardez also learned Panetta's visit to consist of American officials concerned with calling trade being connected to terrorist training. And in this regard, he drops some broad hints about big drug syndicates with connections to very powerful people. The whole implications might has been brought up before, as a game-changer, together with gambling lord money, in local politics.

Remember estimated that drug industry as a billion peso-a-day one: that's P365 billion a year or $7.3 billion. Enough to reunite American interests? The American DEA in 2006 estimated the value of the cultivation drug trade at $1.3 billion a year. That's $1.3 billion in 2006 terms. Add to that $1.6 billion a year trafficking industry in Mexico and an American armed officer's proposed 2005 thesis estimated the global drug trade at $300-500 billion, although the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) estimated the world illegal drug market to range between $400 billion and $1.5 trillion.

The thing is, an administration that perpetually brags of its near-total dominance in the house, senate, and governorships and mayorships, would

What's in store for our senior citizens

"A SPECIAL VISION OF LIFE" AS SEEN THROUGH THE LENS of Ferdinand Revelle (FMRev) is the theme of an exhibit featuring photos taken by 11 Batangas San Lorenzo PWDs who were mentored by photographers of the Makati Camera Club. Their work will highlight the celebration of National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week which runs through July 17-23. The photo exhibit will run July 17-19 at the Gilarmen 4 lobby.

Organized by Chairperson Elaida de Spencer and Florabella Bolisay in Makati City.

REVELLE

Ramon J. Farolan

Last month, courtesy of the office of Sen. Pia "Cayetano" Cayetano, I received a copy of a draft consolidated committee report on pending Senate senior citizen bills. It was initially prepared by several Senate committees but the final product is under the sponsorship of Senators Cayetano, Mullon and Panfilo Lacson under Sen. Loren B. Legarda. Other co-authors of the measure are Senators Angara, Santiago, Villar and Defensor.

Let me focus on some of the more important changes which will be of great benefit to senior citizens if our committee succeeds.

As all senior citizens are aware of, the 20 percent discount we enjoyed under the law was drastically affected by the imposition of the 12-percent Expanded Value Added Tax (EVAT). In effect we were left with only an 8 percent benefit instead of the full 20 percent authorized by law.

The proposed legislation to be known as the "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2009" aims to correct this anomaly.

Henceforth, senior citizens shall be entitled to the following:

"A) The grant of 30 percent discount for the exclusive use and enjoyment of senior citizens from all establishments which are covered by the Expanded Value Added Tax (EVAT) Law on the following:

"1. On the purchase of medicines, including the purchase of influenza and pneumococcal vaccines and other essential medical supplies; provided, that the DOH shall administer free vaccination against the influenza virus and pneumococcal disease for indigent senior citizens patients, subject to the pneumococcal guidelines to be issued by the Department of Health;

"ii. On the utilization of services in hotels and similar lodging establishments, restaurants and recreation centers;

"iii. On the professional fees of attending physicians in all private hospitals, medical facilities, outpatient clinic and home care services;

"iv. In actual transportation fare for domestic air transport services and sea shipping vessel and the like, based on the actual fare, advanced booking and similar discounted fare; and

"v. On funeral and burial services for the death of senior citizens.

"B) The grant of a minimum of 20 percent discount for the exclusive use and enjoyment of senior citizens from all establishments not covered by the EVAT Law on the following:

"1. On medical and dental services, diagnostic and laboratory fees including medical supplies in all private hospitals and medical facilities, outpatient clinic and home care services, in accordance with the rules and regulations to be issued by the Department of Health in coordination with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth);

"ii. The admission fees charged by theaters, cinema houses and concert halls, circuses, carnivals and other similar places of culture, leisure and amusement.

"iii. In actual fare for land transportation travel in public utility buses (PUB), public utility jeepneys (PUJ), taxi, Asian Utility Vehicles (AUVs), shuttle services and public railways including light rail transit (LRT), mass rail transit (MRT), Philippine National Railways (PNR) and any subway train part."

NOTE: There is now a differentiation between establishments covered by the Expanded Value Added Law (EVAT) and those not covered by the same law. There is also a difference in the discounts for air and sea transportation (5% percent), as against land transportation (20 percent).

The use of credit cards has always been a problem with some business establishments not honoring the discount if a senior citizen card is presented.

The new measure reads: "The discounts provided for herein may be availed of on cash or credit card purchases and also apply to sales, receipts or income from the service; provided, that in case of a specific discount offered on professional goods and services a higher than the discount provided herein, the senior citizen shall avail of the higher discount provided, however, that in case the specific discount offered on promotional goods and services is less than the discounts provided herein, the senior citizen shall be entitled to the total discount senior citizens are entitled to and the difference shall be applied to enable them to enjoy the full discount provided in this Act."

There is also a program covering vision services for senior citizens.

"For this purpose, senior vision services shall refer to services to elderly persons who have a functional visual impairment. Functional visual impairment' means an impairment of sight that interferes with the senior citizen's ability to perform specific daily living skills and tasks. Persons who are not regarded as legally blind, pursuant to this paragraph, but who do experience difficulty in seeing, may also be eligible for senior vision services. These services shall include but not be limited to, diagnostic tests and low vision screening, information and referral, client and family counseling, referrals for ophthalmological, optometric and optometric health care services, technical assistance and training for human service personnel to serve senior citizens who are blind or visually impaired."

Punitive measures for violation of the law: "The owner, manager and/or employee of any establishment who refuses to honor the senior citizen card issued by the government shall, if found guilty, be punished by a fine of not less than ten thousand (P10,000) pesos nor more than fifty thousand (P50,000) pesos, or imprisonment of not less than one month nor more than six months, or both, at the discretion of the court.

"Upon filing of any appropriate complaint and due notice and hearing, the proper authorities may also cause the cancellation or revocation of the business permit, permanent closure and/or temporary suspension of the establishment found to any business entity that fails to abide by the provisions of this Act."

* * *

Let me emphasize that this proposal is still pending in the Senate, and has a long way to go before final approval and implementation. But I am certain that by the time it is passed, if you have any comments or recommendations, now is the time to be heard. Other proposed changes will be taken up in future columns.

Democracy is in the count

LETTERS

COMPUTERIZED OR MANUAL, THE 2010 elections must proceed. So to misquote cole, because the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy, not by despotism.

But all Filipinos must be vigilant: engineer, sanggano and vano for the upcoming midterms, and protect the votes cast. As British playwright Tom Stoppard once said, "It's not the voting that's democracy, it's the counting."

History repeats itself. The 2004 election will happen again. If 59 percent will do nothing! Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

—ETHNUL BERGADO,
Malasa na Lupa, Lipa City

Airport immigration officers must have access to updated info

AFTER MY UNFORTUNATE EXPERIence with Nida 3 immigration last June 23, I now wish my parents had named me Marianne Svetlana Thermidora Jhamica Ashford. I almost missed my early morning flight because I share the same name and surname as a person who's on the hold-departure order (HDO) list.

I asked that they check the middle name and birth date for comparison, but the immigration employee in that counter, Hermia Demetrio Lopez, said they didn't have any. He was somewhat arrogant and told me that I should prove that I was not the same person with the HDO. Imagine the agonizing wait for their supervisor, Marlene Pedrosilla, who Lopez said was the only person who could decide on my case. Pedrosilla showed up about 20 minutes before my flight.

In fairness, she was very easy to deal with and said that despite typos of requests, the court's have not provided them per the complete details of the person in question. Pagdating ninyo sa immigration duty Pendrosilla lamped.

—THRISHA AUSTRIA,
trisaustria@yahoo.com

Once in power, representatives fail to represent their voters

THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF Representatives pushing for the convening of a constituent assembly do not really represent the masses who elected them. After election and inauguration to office, these congressmen simply do as they please. They do not heed the voice of their constituents whom they swore to represent.

As Fr. Joaquin Bernas wrote in his book, Volcanoes "Congress, underthemore having been elected for the purpose of framing the Constitution, consists of people who currently hold political power and are not likely to be inclined to make changes that can diminish their power."

—LARRY BARRAZA,
larrymarbarr@gmail.com

Only 20 electoral cases pending in HRET, not 38

THE EDITOR TO MELBOR OLIVARES-Cavanaugh's Ate Lu column titled "Government now and make our deadlines in 2010." In paragraph 5, Cavanaugh stated: "Exactly 38 protest cases still remain unresolved by the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET) ... including the protests filed by Cuban Espino and Green on Tagum; it against Rachel Arenas in Pangasinan's 5th district; the Lacson vs. Sandoval case in Bacolod; the Arroyo vs. Cardona case in Tagaytay and the Salceda vs. Gonzalez case in what used to be the province of Sharif Kabunsuan."

From May 28, 2007 to March 3, 2008, 38 electoral cases (29 protest cases and nine quo warranto cases) were filed. Of those cases, the HRET has resolved 22 (11 protest cases and seven quo warranto cases) while finality.

Contrary to Cavanaugh's claim, a decision was promulgated on Sulco vs. Aldaba on Nov. 27, 2008.

Of late, after the Supreme Court rendered her April 21 decision on the petitions involving the reelection of Rep. Jocelyn C. Limkaichong, two other quo warranto cases were filed with the HRET questioning her Filipino citizenship: HRET Case No. 07-039, Villando vs. Limkaichong, which was filed on April 23, 2009; and HRET Case No. 07-043, Ingco vs. Limkaichong, which was filed on May 27, 2009.

Also recently filed with the HRET, as a consequence of the April 21, 2009 Supreme Court decision on Imelda vs. Comelec, directing the Comelec to proclaim veritable party-list as members of the House of Representatives, are the following two quo warranto cases: HRET Case No. 07-040, Locsin Jr., et al. vs. Palparan Jr. party list; and HRET Case No. 07-041, Locsin Jr., et al. vs. Aangat Tayo and Abayon, party list.

As of today, there are only 20 electoral cases—including the three electoral cases, the decisions/resolutions of which have not yet become final; and the four electoral cases recently filed—still pending before the HRET; not 38 as Cavanaugh stated. In the meantime, the HRET is conducting the required proceedings to resolve the remaining electoral cases. In fact, several cases will soon be ready for deliberation by the HRET.

Implying a delay, Cavanaugh further stated that there was miscarriage of justice in connection with the deposition of Noel O. Cortez vs. Henry P. Lanot. The case was filed during the 2007-2009 congressional term; the HRET rendered its decision on the case on Jan. 22, 2008, about four months prior to the May 10, 2004 elections.

—DANTE B. PASCUA FELIX,
Assistant para of the tribunal
Office of Representative Electoral Tribunal,
Electoral Tribunal Building,
Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City

Meralco Typhoon Watch

Don't worry, kasabi kaagad ang kuryente. Para laging may alam ng bawat isa, para dagdag-ilaw.

Daig ng HANDA ang hindi.

16211

MERALCO

ang kwentong yan Meralco

The right way to bring down medicine prices

I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR ALL efforts to lower the needs of the disadvantaged members of our society, particularly those efforts that can bring down the cost of health care and make health care more accessible to everyone in our country. However, I believe that imposing price controls on a limited number of medicines is not the right approach. Rather than helping people, it will hurt them because it sends the wrong message to the international business community regarding the commitment of our nation to a free market economy and intellectual property rights, and it will discourage job-producing foreign direct investment in all business sectors.

I believe the right way to bring down the cost of all medicines, and just the 22 on the WHO International Price Index, is to focus on promoting increased manufacturing and sale of generic drugs and working with pharmaceutical companies to get them to voluntarily reduce the price of drugs and to manufacture generics in the Philippines.

In this regard, the Zuellig Family Foundation, an organization which I serve as chair, is pleased to announce that 24 off-patent pharmaceuticals (generics) are being manufactured locally at Interphil, the Zuellig manufacturing arm. Dr. Stephen Zuellig, chair of the Zuellig Group, announced that on May 4 on the occasion of his 82nd birthday. These products are already available in the market at prices that are 50 percent less than the leading branded equivalents. Other companies are also manufacturing generics and will others are reminded to this as an option.

I believe efforts should be directed at working with the pharmaceutical industry to increase these efforts. This will have long-term and sustainable impact on the price of health care in our country.

—ROBERTO R. ROMULO
presidential adviser on
international competitiveness

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All letters to the editor are required to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

DZRH NEWS DZRH

NO. 1 KAUNAUNAHAN SA PILIPINAS

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CHRONICLING THE EVENTS
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THROUGH NEWS AND INFORMATION,
ENTERTAINMENT, EDUCATION, AND CIVIC ACTION

Programme schedule:

July 13 - 15	8:00 A.M.	Indy Blues, MBC Lobby
July 13 - 15	7:00 - 9:00 A.M.	Morning Band Exhibitions, CCP Complex
July 13	8:00 A.M.	Opening of Photo Exhibit, Aliw Theater Lobby
July 13 - 15	9:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.	Jobs Expo, Aliw Theater Hall
July 14	7:30 A.M.	Launching of DZRH Jingle & Music Video
July 14	9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.	Medical Check-up/Drug Legal Consultations, Star Theater Lobby
July 15	10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.	Morning Band Competition, CCP Complex
July 15	12:00 NN - 2:00 P.M.	Recognition Programme, Star Theater
July 15	6:00 P.M.	Free Concert featuring Rachel Ann Go, Yeng Constantino, Regine Shamrock & Rosenfeldt, Aliw Theater

We re-affirm our commitment to serve the Filipino
First and Foremost.
Maraming salamat po sa patuloy pamilya ng pagmamahal.

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Across the NATION

More cargo ships laid up at Davao port

MALALAG, DAVAO DEL SUR—MORE AND MORE cargo ships are being brought here to lay up as the country and the rest of the world suffer from a sharp decline in international cargo volume, according to the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina).

In a report on Wednesday, Marina said the number of cargo ships that dropped anchor off the port had risen to 31 since January, at least 10 of the 31 ships docked are owned by large international shipping companies.

Local officials, however, refuse to disclose how much revenue the lay-ups have as the government following requests of ship owners, citing security reasons.

The port here is considered one of the most ideal harboring areas in the Philippines as it is about 30 kilometers south of Davao City and more than 4 km long and 1 km wide.

The site, which the Bria Asin Bertle Chartering Philippines helped develop in 2005, was accredited as a regional anchorage for ships awaiting berthing of loaders and dry cargo vessels, regardless of tonnage and size.

The influx of cargo ships dropping anchor in the port has alarmed police, however.

Supt. Alberto Lupisa, director of the 1104th provincial police mobile group, said the ships were thawing many people who are impressed by their huge sizes each day.

"We are expecting more lay-ups (docking of ships) at the port in the coming days as the global financial crisis worsens," he said.

Because of this, Lupisa said terrorists might target the ships, which prompted the police to reinforce security at the port.

Senior Supt. Ronald Arba Rosa, officer in charge of the provincial police office, said the province has always been known as the drop off point for people coming from academy and several Muslimes.

He said this was the reason police tightened security in the province to prevent someday from slipping in.

Last year, at least two bombattacks, which killed nearly a dozen people, occurred in Digos City, the province's capital.

In 2007, a bomb attack in Buanlan town, Orlando R. Dayag, Inquirer Mindanao

THE POLICE mobile group in Davao del Sur conduct sea-borne patrol along the Malalag bay to ensure the safety of the 31 international armed vessels anchored here due to global crisis.

6 schools suspend classes due to A(H1N1)

SIX LAGUNA SCHOOLS, VICTIMS of storm in Los Baños, have suspended their classes after some students showed symptoms of influenza A(H1N1) virus.

The Los Baños National High School, Lopez Elementary School, Christian School International, Stukkling School and Beach Hill School, all in Los Baños, suspended classes this week, after some of their students developed fever and showed symptoms of the A(H1N1) virus, said Barangay Captain Nilo Lapiz in a phone interview on Saturday.

"We were told by our municipal health officers that the best thing they could do these was to suspend classes to prevent the spread of the virus," Lapiz said.

He said tests samples of the students who showed symptoms of the virus were sent to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine in Muntinlupa resting.

In San Pablo City, 39 students from the St. Peter's College Seminary were asked not to go to classes from July 7 to 17 after one of them were found to be infected with A(H1N1) flu, according to rector Fr. Jerry Cuela.

At least five priests studying in that seminary were unable to take lessons yesterday and was not to do so to the succeeding days.

Last month, the city government of San Jose City suspended classes in selected schools, days and high schools for a week after 11 persons were found to be positive of the virus.

Nine of the cases were students from public and private schools. One was a "balikbayan," and another a resident of the city.

In Dumaguete City, flu cases affecting over 100 students. Dozens were rushed.

"Those who had slight fever, flu and cough were advised to go home," Antonio said.

Marvinar B Cinco and Reynaldo Peters, Inquirer Southern Luzon; with a report from Alex Pal, Inquirer Visayas

Panay drivers go on strike today

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—TRANSPORT groups on Panay Island were expected to start this morning a two-day strike to protest the continued increase in oil prices and the significant increase in Diesel fuel by the refineries.

The strike led by the Hugpong Transport alliance was expected to significantly affect public transport in Iloilo, Aklan, Capiz and Guimaras Island, said Edgar Salcedo, one of the convenors of the alliance.

The strike started at 12:01 a.m. Monday and will end at midnight on Wednesday.

Salcedo, also chair of the Panay chapter of the Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nationalist (PISTON), and around 40 groups of public jeepneys in Iloilo province would stop playing their routes.

He said most public jeepneys in Iloilo City would also stay off the streets even as some leaders of the Iloilo City Alliance of Drivers Associations (Iloilo) have declared that they would not join the protest action.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas said he did not foresee any inconvenience to commuters because most of the transport groups in the city would not join the protest.

But Treñas said he would order the suspension of the permissive boundary ordinance, which bars provincial jeepneys from entering the city proper, and allow tricycles and pedicabs to ply the city's streets if there would be a lack of jeepneys.

Public transportation was also expected to be paralyzed in Aklan, including the capital town of Kalibo, because of the participation of jeepney associations playing the province and groups of tricycle drivers and operators within Kalibo.

Salcedo said the strike would be joined by jeepney and tricycle drivers and operators groups in Capiz and Roxas City.

The continued rise in oil prices have pushed down their income after the series of setback in the minimum fare, he said.

The protesting groups also want the suspension of the implementation of Department of Transportation and Communications Department Order 2008-35 which increased fines for violations from 200 pesos to 8,500 pesos depending on the violations.

Police have been placed on alert in anticipation of the strike.

Iloilo police director Senior Supt. Nicanor de la Paz said more policemen will be deployed in key areas to prevent violence.

Quezon clergy slam dam plan

LUCENA CITY—TWO CATHOLIC BISHOPS and 28 priests in the Prelature of Infanta have assailed the government's plan to push through with the construction of the controversial Laiban dam that will cover a portion of Rizal and Quezon provinces.

In a signed statement, a copy of which was sent to the Inquirer, Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona, head of the Prelature based in Infanta, Quezon, his predecessor Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen and the priests have expressed serious concern over the government's adamant position to continue the project despite strong opposition of the people, especially the affected tribal communities.

"We're also wondering about the government's timing...where the 2010 election is just around the corner—to grant the project is announced," the Church leaders said.

They also questioned the truthfulness of the government-declared intention that the Laiban dam project would benefit the people.

"They always say that the project is for development, then for whom?" the bishops and priests asked.

Fr. Jose Montalbana, Task Force Sierra Madre (TFSM) chair and one of the signatories in the statement, citing reports from the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, said the government was showing undue haste to seal the contract to build the P32.2-billion dam with the local contractor Jose Miguel Corp., controlled by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., a key political ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Since 2007, the TFSM has been conducting signature campaigns among the residents of Real, Infanta and General Nakar towns in northern Quezon to stop the government plan to resurrect the Laiban dam project.

The priests cited the risk posed by the project as its proposed site lies between the Marikina and Real-Infanta fault lines.

Once the dam breaks because of earthquakes, a repeat of the destructive flood in 2004 can result in double in an unimaginable catastrophe, they said.

The Church leaders also argued that the proponents of the dam project have yet to conduct consultation with the affected indigenous communities and local governments.

The Infanta clergy have expressed fear that the proposed dam inside the mountain watershed would displace about 3,500 families living in seven barangays in Infanta and one barangay in General Nakar, mostly indigenous people.

"The project's does not recognize the law on ancestral domain and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act," they claimed.

The dam project was supposedly part of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos' plan of building an industrial complex in northeastern Luzon, but was shelved due to strong opposition from indigenous people.

Only two diversion tunnels are left and serve as reminders of the aborted project.

The project, a looming joint-venture between San Miguel Corp. and the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System, is designed to divert water from the Kaliwa and Kanan rivers in the Sierra Madre and augment the water supply in Metro Manila.

The two reservoir covers are smaller tributaries of the Agos River that runs along General Nakar and Infanta towns.

The bridges and culverts and the resulting diminished water flow in the Agos River could affect navigation, irrigation and fisheries in the river and its estuaries.

The target date for the dam project has already declared a hot spot for occasional by the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Priorities. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

VNOM is escorted by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ibrado (right) and Lt. Gen. Hilton Ataga, Western Mindanao Command chief, upon his arrival at the Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga City.

THE ITALIAN engineer, reunited with his family, waves to the crowd at well-wishers at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

Vagni united with family

From page A1

discretion of the prosecutor."

Vagni was rushed over to Sin to Vice Gov. Ron-Ron Salisdalla and he was taken to a military hospital for precautionary medical checks before being flown to nearby Zamboanga City en route to Manila.

Salisdalla, who had previously negotiated for Vagni's release, was elected by the Abu Sayyaf to proceed to a village near Maimbung town after midnight, where Gibbons found the Italian, Arevalo said.

Board and lodging fee

No reason was paid for Vagni's freedom, Salisdalla said. But the told reporters that she gave the kidnappers P50,000 as "board and lodging fee" when one of the men asked for cigarette money.

"They were asking for any amount. So that we would not be delayed any longer, I gave P50,000 from my own pocket. It was for goodwill, it came from me and it was not ransom. No conditions attached," she said.

Vagni narrated his ordeal to the families of several soldiers who died in clashes with Abu Sayyaf rebels during pursuit operations over the past six months. "Condolences came deep from my heart," he said.

Asked how he was treated by his captors, he said: "They treated me well and they called me Apo (a respected elder)." But during his captivity, Vagni said, his health deteriorated by the day.

"We went to different places every week—different areas, different food, my stomach suffered, I got diarrhea, and I had to adjust more, for every time we walk for many many hours, my body became weak every day. I got weaker, weaker and weaker but we had to go and walk."

Will to see family

Wearing a dark shirt with a Philippine Marines logo and blue jogging pants, Vagni, visibly weak, smiled and waved to the cameras as he was escorted with his Thai wife and daughter at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City. He hugged them tightly and kissed them.

"Thank you, thank you all very much," the beaming Italian waved to media men, who were not allowed near him.

"The will is to see my family, to see my wife and my daughter," Vagni, near tears, told ABS-CBN television's network in an interview on board the plane that took him from Jolo to Zamboanga.

"This gives you big strength because you know that your family is there waiting for you ... You adapt in the situation. You have no choice. And you survive everything.

"I only feared some little puppy that we had after I was sure, big some thoughts in my wife," said Vagni, adding he had been threatened with beheading. He said he often imagined seeing "my head in a big basket."

He said he had been fed dried fish and rice, and had lost 20 kilos (44 lb).

When will killings end?

Before he left Zamboanga for Manila, Vagni thanked those who prayed and worked for his release, saying: "I was thinking that it will never happen."

Vagni said he was not aware that his comrades, Swiss Andreas Notter, had escaped, adding the rebels separated them because he couldn't keep pace with his captors in the jungle due to sickness.

Notter walked away from his captors in April, covered days after another Red Cross worker, Filipino Mary Jean Lacaba, was set free by the rebels. The three were taken hostage on Jan. 15 after they inspected a sanitation project at a prison in Jolo.

Salisdalla said Dayal decided to free Vagni but insisted that the government should not forget his commitment to rehabilitate the two Subas.

"I also told them that the military is going after them and that his men were being killed in such encounters. Does he want them and their families wiped out? Also, the civilian population is suffering. When will all the killings on both sides end?" Salisdalla said.

Disrupted by gunfire

The negotiations on Saturday were disrupted by gunfire after Dayal's group apparently encountroopers of a government Scout quickly left and Salisdalla said she feared that Vagni would not be released.

But late that night, she said Dayal called to apologize for the disruption, and said he was sending someone to them for directions on where the Italian was being held.

"He did not want me to go because I have several bodyguards with me, but I insisted and said I would only bring three policemen with me. We found Vagni in excellent health."

Salisdalla said she also learned that Vagni was at first under Legason in neighboring Maimbung town, three to four hours away.

"The military is going after their group and his men are being killed in such encounters. If, on the civilian population is suffering," Salisdalla told reporters.

She said the men who released Vagni in her custody to be different from Dayal's group, adding, "I don't know who they were, probably it's their Abu Sayyaf comrades whose faces I saw for the first time."

Remarkably well

ICRC spokesperson Bernardo Lepoti said Vagni was doing "remarkably well" despite his ordeal and concerns for his health—he has a hernia and there were earlier fears about his state of mind.

He declined to discuss the terms of his release, but stressed that the international aid agency did not pay a ransom.

The ICRC's head of delegation to the Philippines, Jean-Daniel Tanoi, said the group was "relieved and happy" that Vagni had finally got out, observing it would continue to implementation programs in the country.

Welcoming Vagni's release, Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said his freeing was on the result of military action, which his government had rejected.

The Abu Sayyaf had previously threatened to behead one of its three captives if government forces did not withdraw. That demand was initially rejected, but Manila later showed other public signals by the captives' families. Reports from Acerbo R. G. Jaymalin, Jacqueline Arcellana, Jerome Aning and Kristine L. Alave; Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao; AE AFP and Reuters

WHAT WENT BEFORE

ON JAN. 15, THREE WORKERS of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were seized at gunpoint by Abu Sayyaf kidnappers on Jolo Island.

Andreas Notter of Switzerland, Eugenio Vagni of Italy, and Jean Lacaba of the Philippines were bundled into the Red Cross vehicle after a meeting with provincial jail officials at Jolo town to improve water and sanitation facilities.

Authorities later identified the leader of the kidnappers as Albader Parad.

A day after the kidnapping, Sec. Alexander Yano, then the chief-of-staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, ordered a 2,000-strong force to go after the kidnappers and rescue the victims.

On Feb. 20, Lacaba was allowed to speak to reporters. She pleaded to the government to secure the immediate release of the hostages.

Parad insisted on a military pullout before proceeding with the negotiations.

On March 15, a gun battle erupted in Indanan outside Jolo, prompting an emotional outburst by Vagni in a telephone conversation with Sen. Richard Gordon three days later. Vagni shouted: "Why does the government want us to die?"

Parad promised Gordon that he would release one hostage once the military implemented a pullout.

A partial withdrawal was completed on March 28, but it did not appease Parad. On March 30, the kidnappers announced that they would execute a hostage the next day at 2 p.m. unless the military agreed to pull out all of its troops from Jolo Island.

The threat did not come to pass. On April 2, Lacaba was freed.

Weeks later, on April 18, Notter, head of the ICRC branch in Zamboanga City, escaped.

On April 22, the government received intelligence reports that Vagni had been turned over to another armed group. Officials offered half a million pesos to anyone with information about his whereabouts.

Two months later, the government said it was willing to suspend military operations against the Abu Sayyaf in exchange for Vagni's release.

The abduction of the ICRC workers was the most high-profile kidnapping of foreigners since 2001, when Abu Sayyaf gunmen snatched nearly two dozen tourists from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan, including three Americans. Gilbert Espeña, Inquirer Research

Barcodes on trees help in fight vs deforestation

From page A1

and global warming.

The plastic tags, like those on supermarket groceries, have been tested in a million trees across Africa, Southeast Asia and South America to help countries keep track of timber reserves.

Helvera, the British company behind the technology, says the barcodes will help firms comply with tough laws on importing sustainable timber into the United States and Europe.

They could also play a role in fighting deforestation, which accounts for about a fifth of global emissions of planet-warming carbon dioxide. The issue will feature in global climate talks in Copenhagen in December.

"We bring transparency and visibility where historically that has probably been limited or lost," Patrick Hewera, Helvetas' chief executive officer, told Reuters.

The company, which has just secured another $4.66 million in funding from investors, has put barcodes on trees around the world, including in Bolivia, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Malaysia and Peru.

The computerized system is less prone to fraud than traditional paper records, carries live data and can help governments to collect more timber taxes, Hewera said.

Harder to cut

While the barcodes can't prevent chainsaw-wielding loggers from cutting down trees, the system makes it hard for them to process, sell or export the wood, Newton said.

Officials in remote forests use handheld computers to scan the tags from the moment a tree is felled to its processing and export, and that live data is put onto Helvetia's secure database.

Every tree above a certain size in a plantation is given an individual barcode. When a tree is cut down, another barcode is attached to the stump and more tags are added to the processed wood to allow customs officials to audit exports at the docks.

Governments, officials and companies can track individual trees through the supply chain and view computerized maps of forests on the database. Timber having a forest or factory without tags will immediately be viewed as illegal, Newton said.

Illegal logging costs timber-producing countries $10 billion a year in stolen wood, lost taxes and lower prices for legally sourced products, the World Bank estimates.

It also takes an environmental toll. Damage to forests raises the risk of fires, flooding and damage to plants and trees that act as a "sink" to soak up carbon dioxide, Britain's Meteorological Office said in a report last year.

Fight vs global warming

Helvera hopes its technology could help countries taking part in a proposed scheme to protect the world's forests as part of the fight against global warming. That is likely to form part of any global climate deal agreed in Copenhagen in December.

The scheme, called Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), aims to increase forest cover to soak up carbon dioxide emissions blamed for rising seas, extreme weather and melting glaciers.

It may include a market-based element where traders buy and sell REDD credits from forestry projects that lock away carbon.

However, trading based on the number of trees in a forest needs close auditing if the market is to work, Helvera says.

"The problem with forests is that it is very hard or validate what is truly out there," Newton said. "If you are trying to track that asset ... you need to be able to make sure that what you think is overstated is really there." Reuters

Ang Kapatiran seeks support of priests, lay leaders

By Yolanda Zerrudo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—THE ANG KAPATIRAN party has started going around Catholic dioceses in the provinces to introduce its brand of politics and enlist support from priests and lay leaders in the communities.

On Friday, Ang Kapatiran leaders met with Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz and members of the local formation Apostolates to discuss a "new kind of politics" that the group has been advocating.

Eric Manalang, Ang Kapatiran president, said that because the party had no money for television and print advertisements, party members would go to several dioceses to introduce their standard-bearer, Dagupan City Councilor John Carlos "JC" Delos Reyes, and the reforms the party would institute if elected into office.

Manalang said party leaders had visited at least 12 dioceses in the country.

While not endorsing the candidacies of Ang Kapatiran, Cruz said he agreed to have party members hold a dialogue with local lay leaders so they could hear the party's vision.

"I want them to hear new politics, how it can be done, some new perspectives and visions. Now, if you [mention] politics, [many people consider it to be] yucky—[those are the] same old politicians serving themselves instead of others, they rob [and] they steal. Baka merong iba [Maybe, there's an alternative]?" Cruz said.

He said he invited to the dialogue people "who know only the politics we have now, which is dirty, so they will have a different perspective."

Manalang said that while there was no such thing as a Catholic vote in the Philippines, "we are appealing to their conscience" to help Ang Kapatiran in 2010 run.

He said popularity alone would not help a candidate win an election, citing the losses of former Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a professional basketball player, and actor Cesar Montano in the senatorial elections in 2004 and 2007, respectively.

Manalang said most administration candidates also lost in the 2007 senatorial elections, proving that money and machinery would not prevail if people do not like a candidate or his or her programs.

Citing the party's estimates, Manalang said 40 percent of Filipino voters belonged to the DE market segment and 60 percent of them are poor, young voters who could make a difference.

"These are 'thinking voters' and if something happens during the elections, it is because of [one thing or] all," he said.

Earlier, Delos Reyes said Ang Kapatiran would open up its nomination process to the public to fill up its list of candidates for vice president and senators.

He said the party was looking for people "who are willing to commit themselves to support the political platform of the party ... and to believe in and abide by its foundational principles without any mental reservation."

Manalang said the nomination process would be open to the public and not restricted to party members.

"Though we are not really after those preparing to become senators who are now Cabinet members or some members of the opposition, through this process they will be given a chance if people nominate them," he said.

He said the party had set up an electoral committee, whose job was to organize the search for Delos Reyes' running mate and the party's senatorial candidates.

"[The selection process] will center on the nineteen's central agenda—peace, corruption, competence, leadership, responsible citizenship and [moral (or) parenthood]," Manalang said. With a report from Robert Dumaguit, Inquirer Central Luzon

KILL ARTHRITIS IN 5 MINUTES
"NERVE STIMULATOR"
FAR EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Sighs of relief from Rome, Manila

Romulo Al

Lacuba were freed in April.

ICRC Philippines chief Jean-Daniel Tanoi said the agency "is relieved and happy that Ingrid will soon be back with his family and friends, who have been living a painful nightmare the almost six months and cannot wait to see him return home."

'Profound gratitude'

Tanoi also expressed ICRC's "profound gratitude" to local officials, the military and police for the release of all three Red Cross workers.

He particularly thanked Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan, Vice Gov. Mar-Anni Sahidulla, and Task Force Comet chief Maj. Gen. Juancho Sabban.

Gordon congratulated the Sulu provincial government, the Red Cross and its local chapters in the province, "the police and soldiers—[the Abu] and even the Abu Sayyaf who demonstrated forbearance."

Catholic Church leaders also lauded Ingid's release and called for an end to abductions in Mindanao.

"We're happy for his release," Monsignor Pedro Quitorio, media director of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), said in a text message.

"But we should be happier if the government could address effectively the problem of kidnapping," he said.

"This indeed is a highlight for us people in Mindanao to now see it together as that peace and progress can reign in the region," said Jolo Bishop Angelito Lampon, whose remarks posted on the CBCP web site called for improved intelligence work against terrorists.

Senators cheer

"I'm glad he is finally free. I just hope the reason was good for his release as the money might again be used for the illegal activities of [the Abu Sayyaf]," said Sen. Francis Escudero.

Sen. Loren Legarda said Ingrid's release showed "what patient negotiations can do to save innocent lives in conflict situations."

"The military authorities tasked with arresting Ingrid should also deserve our congratulations for showing restraint, caution and taking skillful calibrated action to ensure the Abu Sayyaf here releasing their captive," she added. With reports from Ria Alave, Norman Bordadora, Philip Tubeza and Inquirer wires

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How can you help Buklod realize its dream of a new Philippines? Any ideas or suggestions are most welcome.

BUKLOD

Sulu governor urges war on Abu Sayyaf

From page A1

the Philippine National Red Cross.

"Vegni and two fellow ICRC workers—Swiss Andreas Notter and Filipino Mark Jean Lacaba—were abducted by the Abu Sayyaf in January. Lacaba and Notter were released on April 2 and April 8, respectively.

Emergency forces

Since the hostage crisis started to train its mouths ago, Tan has declared a state of emergency in the province on head of the Sulu crisis committee.

A parallel move that Tan was able to accomplish during the period was the arming of thousands of "Emergency Forces" known as the Civilian Volunteer Organization (CVO). There are now "more than 2,000" CVO members, he said.

Recruited in various towns of Sulu, the men would step up the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, the governor said.

However, ace-shooter was selected by the CVOs would be coordinated with the military's Task Force Comet in Sulu and the Philippine National Police.

'Perfect timing'

"This is the time. This is the perfect timing to launch the offensive against the Abu Sayyaf. Without the offensive, they will surely take a hostage again. They're brave only when they have a kidnap victim," Tan said.

At one point during the hostage crisis involving the Red Cross workers, the Abu Sayyaf, through its subcommander Albader Parad, demanded not only the pullout of military forces in certain areas but also of CVO forces, composed mostly of Tausug.

Other politicians in the province referred to the CVOs as Tan's private army, but the governor maintained that the force was created to address lawlessness and criminality perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf.

"All our efforts to boost the economy and tourism in Sulu will go to waste if the problem of peace and order persists, so as head of the province, I am taking it upon myself to make sure that the real thing—what these bandits deserve—will finally be brought to them. One that will bring several to all the boundaries that they are perpetrating all these years," the governor said.

Sen. Mar Roxas also rallied on the military to finally crush the Abu Sayyaf once for all.

"There can be no negotiations with terrorists. They agenda has nothing to do with issues or private humanity. Their reason for being is precisely as their name states, to sow terror," he said.

Roxas said the military's pursuit operations should continue, citing reports that more civilians were still being held by the bandit group.

Livelihood support

Gordon said that based on his discussions with the military and Malacañang officials, there was no reason paid for the release of Vegni, but the Italian government had agreed to give tractors and other livelihood support to residents.

"If you ask why Vegni was released only now and not in the last six months, I don't know the answer to that," said Gordon, who noted that Vegni was treated fairly well by his abductors.

Gordon said it took some time before the government realized that the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers were not after any ransom but respect.

"They just wanted to send a message to the government. They are not misguided brothers. We have allowed their own leaders to neglect them," said the senator, who cited the government's inaction on massive poaching by transnational fishing boats in Sulu waters as one of the Moro people's biggest complaints.

He said that even as the Red Cross expressed its joy for the freeing of the last ICRC hostage, it also realized that the government must work much harder to deliver good governance to Sulu and other provinces in Mindanao that have similar situations.

"Education, health services, jobs and livelihood must be delivered if we are to hope that what happened in Sulu will not happen again," Gordon said in a statement issued shortly after Vegni's release. With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

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PRAYER FOR PEACE
Muslim women from Barangay Culiat in Quezon City pray for peace in Mindanao following the recent spate of bomb attacks in Cotabato City, Jolo and Iligan City.

4 suspected thieves, cop slain in Laguna shootout

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—FOUR suspected thieves and a police officer were killed in a gunfight in Laguna on Saturday afternoon, police reported.

Chief Supt. Perfecto Palad, Calabarzon regional police director, said the suspected thieves—Dhen Patrimonio, Melchor Barong, Pedro Manang and Dhanz Mendoza—died on the spot.

PO2 Ricardo Medida was declared dead on arrival at San Pablo City Medical Center from a bullet wound in the head.

The four, Palad said, were involved in robbery and double homicide cases in San Pablo City early this year.

He said the police received a report by phone that the suspects were seen at Israel Subdivision in Barangay San Francisco 1, San Pablo, at around 2 p.m.

The four reportedly fired shots at the responding policemen, which resulted in at least an hour of gunfight.

Police recovered two shotguns, one 9-mm pistol, a .38-cal. revolver and some bullets at the crime scene. Meriam Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Honduras crisis a warning to tinkerers of Constitution

From page A1

According to BBC News, tensions have been brewing in Honduras in recent months. Zelaya ranked the head of the military, who refused to give logistical support for the June 28 vote. Then he, he refused to deliver the ballots. But the Supreme Court overruled Zelaya, saying the military chief should be reinstated.

When Zelaya insisted that the referendum should push through, Congress voted to remove him for what it called "repeated violations of the Constitution and of the law." The Supreme Court ordered Zelaya's removal "to protect law and order."

It should be noted that Congress and the Supreme Court included the removal of Zelaya, and the military took its orders from these two constitutional bodies.

The coup illustrates the extent to which a constitutional crisis could develop over a presidential initiative to effect constitutional changes that would allow a nation's leader to extend his stay in office.

Filipinos continue to be riveted by the developments over the deepening political standoff in Honduras as the crisis gives Filipinos a live model of political turmoil that has been generated by attempts to change the Constitution to open the door to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's term limits as a president.

In the eyes of the Filipinos, the coup foreshadows the political turmoil that lies ahead if attempts to push constitutional change through legislative methods.

Catalyst of crisis

The immediate catalyst of the Honduran crisis was Zelaya's call for a public consultation on the lifting of the presidential term limit (a single four-year term in Honduras). It came five months before Zelaya's stay in office was to have ended.

The push for amending the 1987 Philippine Constitution to open the way for amendments would allow President Macapagal-Arroyo to extend her term beyond May 2010.

The move is a highly provocative initiative that is charged with incendiary ingredients.

The Honduras turmoil should warn Mrs Arroyo and her political allies in the House of Representatives against going ahead with their plan to convene a Senate-less constituent assembly that will amend the Constitution.

The Honduras crisis is an unfolding tableau of crisis potential arising from attempts at constitutional changes in this period. Honduras has a discrete political experience from the Philippines on the methods of constitutional change.

In this light, there should be no reason for naysayers that Filipinos would be less violent or vocal in their opposition to attempts to tinker with the Constitution to allow their President to stay in office—a President who now enjoys the most abysmal public popularity ratings ever given to any previous Philippine leader by public opinion polls.

Similarities

There are several similarities common to the Philippines and Honduras in their social contexts.

Honduras' entropy is rife with economic and social inequality. It is plagued by endemic poverty. Police officers have been implicated in high-profile crimes, and the police are thought to have been involved in the murders by death squads of youths and street children. (The Philippine Commission on Human Rights is investigating police and local officials' complicity in the killings by death squads in Davao City.)

Thousands of Honduran leave the country each year, most of them for the United States. The money sent home by the overseas workers is an important source of income for many families in the Central American nation.

Although Honduras has been politically stable since the 1980s, the relations between the president and other institutions have been strained by the fact that Honduras is a poor country beset by corruption, with a huge income disparity and widespread gang violence.

While Zelaya swerved the presidency with a center-right ideology he alienated his allies in the Liberal Party by moving the country leftward. Zelaya enjoys the support of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and other left-wing leaders of the region.

This appears to have alarmed certain sectors in Honduras, which decided his plans for constitutional change as an attempt to stay in power.

Positions harden

The standoff in the Costa Rica talks has deepened the positions of the ousted and interim governments.

Zelaya said his reinstatement as president was "non-negotiable," while Micheletti insisted that Zelaya's return to power was "an impossibility."

What is scary is Mr Arroyo in that many of her local political adversaries threaten to prosecute her criminally after the steps down next year.

This prospect appears to be driving her to push for constitutional amendments that could allow her to hold on to office and so be protected by the immunities shielding the presidential office.

The Honduras standoff is a nightmare scenario to fear.

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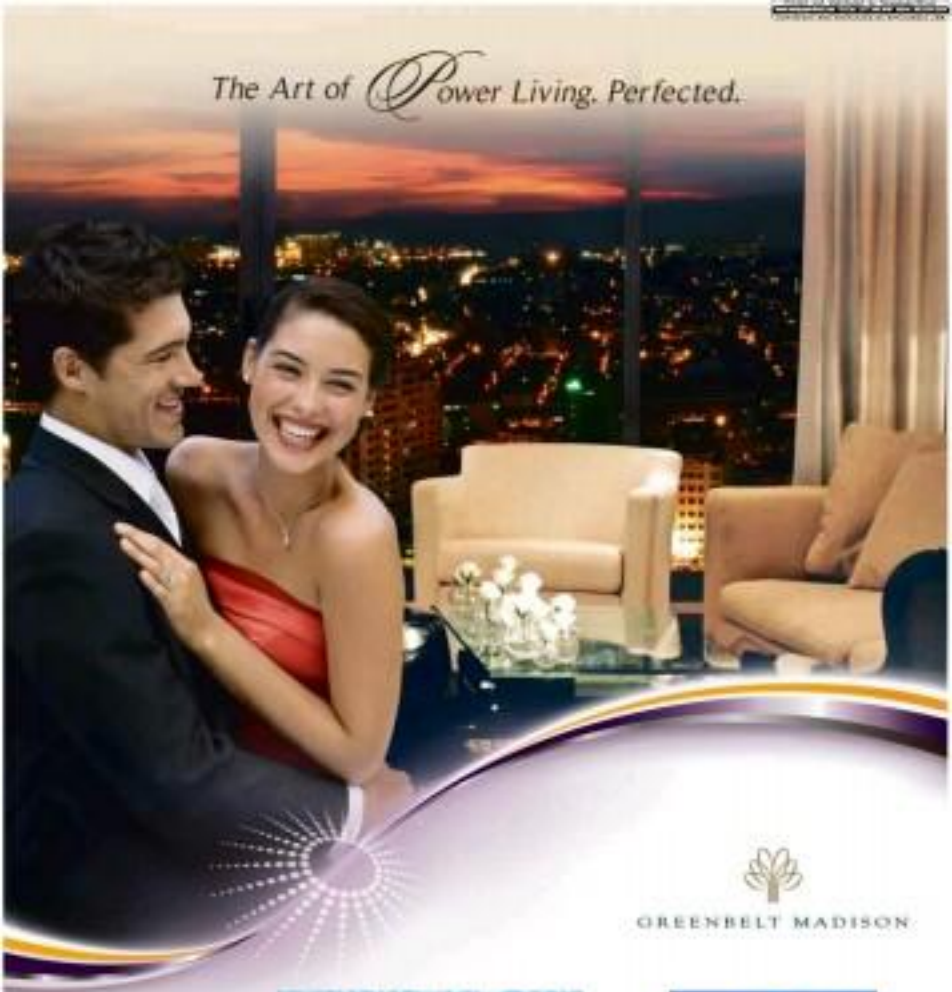

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Blasts rock 2 banks in Camanava

UNDER CLOSE WATCH
SPO1 Rony Orozco, of the San Juan police keeps a sharp eye out for any criminal activity on the city through closed-circuit television cameras installed in key areas

Company conflict, not terrorism, likely behind attacks, police say

By OJ Yap

BLASTS ROCKED TWO different branches of Allied Bank in Valenzuela and Caloocan within minutes of each other late Saturday night, but authorities quickly dismissed the possibility they were the handiwork of terrorists.

No one was reported hurt in the blasts in the Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela) area. A police official said yesterday an initial examination by crime scene operatives showed that the twin explosions could have been set off by pillboxes and not improvised explosive devices.

The blasts caused only minor damage to the buildings in both cases, and none of the materials found at the scene indicated the presence of high-grade explosives typically used by terrorists, the chief of the Northern Police District (NPD) said.

Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr., NPD director, said the explosions occurred within minutes of each other with the blast in Valenzuela City happening at about 11:15 p.m. Saturday. BLASTS, A2

DID YOU KNOW

In 1998, Aizarie Ayman Pamaran, Miss of the Mountain Province filed a bill seeking to create a city in the Cordillera area to be known as Cabikhanan City. Other ecozones also mooted the proposed city: Cascon City, after then President Manuel L. Quezon, who signed the bill into law on Oct. 23, 1939.

JAYEL Abraham, Inquirer Research

VENDORS TAKE OVER FOOTBRIDGE
Cho, 46, of Pasig City enlists "Three are illegal peddlers and vendors on the footbridge between PGH and Robinsons Ortigas, making it hard for people to walk through it."
(Alex Baluyut)

Maynilad replies

THIS pertains to the report of a leaking pipe on Old Wilcon Avenue corner Kanlaon Street in Barangay Mahaklik, Cainta, which was published in the Metro Citizen's Call on July 6. The leak, which comes from a suspected old and abandoned service pipe, was discovered on July 2 and assigned to our contractor for immediate repair. Since the leaking pipe is located on a national road, our contractor needs an excavation permit from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). We hope to have the leak repaired once the permit is secured from DPWH.

CHIN NUÑEZ C. DEJARME
Maynilad corporate affairs and public relations head

Drive vs 'kabal-kabal'

THIS is in response to the complaint filed in the Metro Citizen's Call from a Makati resident named Mary Abou regarding illegal Asian Axle operations on McKinley Road, Barangay Forbes, Makati City. Upon learning of the said complaint on June 8, I immediately called the attention of the Makati Station Traffic Enforcement Branch (MSTEB) of the Makati police and ordered an investigation into the matter. On the same day, my office received a report from Chief Insp. Jaime Santos, MSTEB chief. According to the report, an intensive campaign against kabal-kabal operations launched in September last year in the area has resulted in the issuance of 302 Citations Tickets (Non-Pleadable) against erring drivers and the impounding of 36 kabal motorcycles. By June 9, 2009 alone, MSTEB apprehended three motorcycle drivers and impounded two abandoned motorcycles. Please be informed that I have ordered MSTEB to step up its efforts and ensure the continued deployment of its personnel to conduct daily operations on McKinley Road, from the corner of Edsa to Tamarind Drive at the Makati-Taguig boundary. Rest assured that the city government will continue to monitor the progress of our campaign against illegal transport operations in Makati for the safety of our residents and the riding public.

MAKATI MAYOR JEJOMAR BINAY

Toxic smoke

SOLMOTRIVE in Estefanos Hill, Camella 2, Mambugan City, are burning trash and plastic materials. The smoke is too thick, it stings our eyes, it's hard to breathe and our laundry, bed sheets and couches smell of smoke. This happens often. Businesses duly had enough do something about this.

ABNE', 43, Mambugan City

Cross at your own risk

IT'S SECURITY in Cross Mindy Asiatic Avenue near Parañaque center. You have to mind cars speed to cross the road. There is no EMBOA traffic enforcer in the area. This has been a problem since 2008. I'm writing at Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Help, please.

JUN SUPNGINI, 48, Pasay Zone

PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(AIDB No. PHIC-ICB-13-5-09 & 17 of 2009)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation Regional Office for NCR (Philhealth PHIC NCR), through its Bids and Awards Committee, invites duly-licensed Philippine firms/entities to apply for eligibility and to bid on the procurement of the following projects:

Project / AIDB #	Source of Project	Location	Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration
NCR-ICB-13-5-09	Corporate Fund	10 Malo Street, Project and Installation of Fire Alarm System	Acquisition/Installation with warranty of One (1) unit Philsoft Fire Alarm System for Office/Medical Purposes	Php 500,000.00	15 days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed
NCR-ICB-17-5-09	20 Malo Street	Various Offices (PHILHEALTH Building, 20 Malo Street, Mandaluyong City)	Lease Agreement for Two (2) Units Photocopying Machine (Heavy Duty) with Maintenance Service and Supply of Consumables (Except Paper)	Php 144,000.00	Within 5 days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed
NCR-ICB-18-5-09	Corporate Fund	Supply Section, Philhealth Central Office	Supply and Delivery of Liquid Toners	Php 170,000.00	15 days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed
NCR-ICB-19-5-09	Corporate Fund	Philhealth Central Office	Supply and Installation of Air Conditioning Units	Php 110,000.00	15 days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed

All Goods, Delivery Receipts/invoices shall be delivered to the PHIC-BAC Office, Supply Section, 7th, 8th, 9th Floor, City Point Condo. Bldg., Ortigas Center, Pasig City, and respectively destined for the services station at the said 8th of the office premises, if applicable, or downstairs by the date and time specified in the above-mentioned.

Bidding will be conducted through Open Competitive Bidding Procedures using Non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part II (IRR-A) of Republic Act (RA) No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Philippine Corporations/Partnerships or Associations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and is eligible to participate in Public Bidding pursuant to Section 23.4.1 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only bids from bidders who pass the eligibility shall be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo to the post-qualification stage to determine the responsiveness of the bid as to the technical and financial requirements. The contract shall then be awarded to the lowest Calculated and Responsive Bid (LCRB) which would be determined as such after the post-qualification process.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Prebidding Conferences(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract, shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The source of funds will be from the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2009 of the Regional Office. The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Docs.	Jun 15 (10:00 AM) to Jun 17, 2009 (4:00 PM) for NCR-ICB-13-5-09; Jun 15 (10:00 AM) to Jun 17, 2009 (4:00 PM) for NCR-ICB-17-5-09; Jun 15 (10:00 AM) to Jun 18, 2009 (4:00 PM) for NCR-ICB-18-5-09; Jun 15 (10:00 AM) to Jun 18, 2009 (4:00 PM) for NCR-ICB-19-5-09
2. Pre-bid Conference	Jun 17, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-13-5-09; Jun 17, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-17-5-09; Jun 18, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-18-5-09; Jun 18, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-19-5-09
3. Deadline for submission of Bid Proposals and Opening of Bids	Jun 30, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-13-5-09; Jun 30, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-17-5-09; Jul 1, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-18-5-09; Jul 1, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-19-5-09
4. Post-Qualification	August 3, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-13-5-09; August 3, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-17-5-09; August 4, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-18-5-09; August 4, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-19-5-09
5. Notice of Award	August 5, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-13-5-09; August 5, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-17-5-09; August 6, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-18-5-09; August 6, 2009 (10:00 AM) for NCR-ICB-19-5-09

Bid Documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment to the Philhealth Cashier, located at the PHIC-BAC Office, 7th, 8th, 9th Floor, City Point Condo., Pasig City, a non - refundable amount of Php 2,500.00 for the Fabrication, Supply & Installation of Philhealth Signages, Php 2,500.00 for the 20 Units Aircon Supply, Php 1,000.00 for the Rental/ Lease of Printers, and Php 2,500.00 for the Airconditioning Units. Only the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall be allowed to secure the Bidding Documents.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the Office of the Secretariat for PHIC NCR Bids and Awards Committee (PHIC NCR- CSBAC) located at Room 905, 9th floor City Point Condo Center, 770 Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City.

All bidders shall submit, together with their bid, the updated Philhealth Premium Contributions for all their employees. Non-submission of the same shall render such bid automatically disqualified.

Philhealth reserves the rights to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Office of the Secretariat for the PHIC-NCR Bids and Awards Committee
MS. YVONNE A. FERNANDEZ
Rm. 905, 9th Floor Philhealth Center
770 Ortigas Ave., Brgy. Ugong, Pasig City
Telefax: 631-7554-4781
ncrbac@phic.gov.ph

Sgd.: **GARY A. GAPUZ**
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee - PHIC NCR-II Area
Pasig City, June 13, 2009

Motorists with unpaid traffic fines told to pay up or else …

By Allison W Lopez

TIME TO PAY UP

Starting July 15, drivers with unpaid traffic fines will be barred from renewing the registration of their vehicles unless they settle their dues first.

With the implementation of an interconnectivity program, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) can now exchange information with the Land Transportation Office (LTO) about drivers with outstanding traffic fines.

The interconnection the two agencies was launched last year to improve their revenue collection which is a major source of income for the government.

Through the MMDA-hosted Line Enforcement System, the MMDA can hook up with the national system of the Department of Transportation and Communication and LTO.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said that through the Internet-based program, their personnel can readily upload the license plates of vehicles owned by delinquent drivers for the LTO's reference.

"When the driver has uncovered [fines] with the MMDA, he cannot renew his motor vehicle registration with the LTO. He has to pay [or pay his traffic fines and then, that will only be the time that we will remove him from our list," he explained.

Previously, the MMDA only reported the names of drivers with outstanding fines to the LTO to prevent them from renewing their driving licenses.

Fernando stressed that the new system would prevent separation of public utility vehicles, particularly buses, from renewing their vehicle registrations for their drivers' misdemeanors under their overdue traffic fines with the MMDA.

Blasts rock 2 banks in Camanava

From page A20

lowed by the one in Caloocan City some 15 minutes later.

The police initially reported that the explosions occurred at around 2:30 a.m. but later said that time happened very late Saturday night.

The first explosion occurred at Allied Bank on Macarthur Highway in Meycauayan, Bulacan, while the second was on Rizal Avenue corner Buencamino Street in Caloocan.

Senior Insp. Jude Lantoyan, Caloocan police chief, said the explosion at the Rizal Avenue branch caused minor damage to the roof and shattered a few window panes.

"It was so loud, like a fire had been. We thought it was a bomb," a bank vendor told the reporter, another vendor said he was sleeping when the blast shook his house. He added that the blast appeared to have originated from the upper left portion of the structure.

Pagdilao said she really can't say anything about the Valenzuela blast, which caused only minimal damage to the bank, including shattered glass.

He discounted the possibility that the incident were the handiwork of terrorists, considering that no bomb components were found at the scene.

But the official said the incidents were likely connected and that the same group could be responsible.

"We don't have any factual basis yet to make any conclusion but the angle we're pursuing right now is the possibility of an inter-rel strife, either with bank employees or customers," he added.

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Metro Briefs

Cry for help

A VENDOR was charged with robbery and attempted rape before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office after his neighbors turned him over to the police yesterday. PO3 Jimmy Jimena said Allan Rebatera, 27, a resident of 1302-A Sampaguita, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, was caught after he robbed a woman neighbor and then tried to rape her. The woman, however, screamed for help, attracting the attention of their other neighbors.

Percy C. Cervalo

Man nabbed

A FORMER court sheriff who was briefly detained in 2008 for a grenade at a barangay councilor was at hotel by policemen early yesterday morning in Sta. Mesa, Manila. Arvin Abaya, 40, a resident of Bacood, Sta. Mesa, was arrested based on the complaint of Adelina Palma, 63, a barangay kagawad in the area. Palma claimed that she met Abaya on Lacson Street at around 12:45 a.m. She said Abaya showed her the grenade and threatened to throw it at her. The incident, however, caught the attention of barangay watchmen who immediately arrested Abaya, a retired sheriff of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

Tina S. Santos

Global economy: Recovering or still on the rocks?

GORED IN PAMPLONA
A runner is gored by the bull "Ermitano" during the sixth run of the Pilura fighting bulls at San Fermin Fiestas in Pamplona, northern Spain, on July 12. It is one of the rumors hurt on Sunday, two days after a man was gored to death, the first such fatality in the festival since 1992. AFP

FRANKFURT—SOME HARD data is now underpinning prospects for a global economic recovery, but world leaders urge caution and at least one says the worst is still to come for many.

No doubt we perk up and head for the high street, hoping cash ready under the bed, or prepare for long, hard times?

Some sample figures released this week gave reason for hope.

In the United States, the world's biggest economy, key jobless claims fell in a single week for the first time in six months. Even better, until a fourth straight week saw as a better indicator also declined.

In Germany, the biggest European economy and a top global exporter, industrial orders and output soared in May, confounding analysts by surprise.

And the International Monetary Fund raised forecasts for growth in China, the world's third-biggest economy, to 7.3 percent this year from 6.5 percent, as well as those for the US and Japan, number two worldwide.

Germany, Japan and the US are all believed to be in the bottom of their worst recessions since the bitter battles of World War II.

That's the good news.

But leaders of the Group of Eight agreed, meanwhile, that a full economic recovery was not running around the corner, US President Barack Obama said on Friday.

"We agreed that full recovery is still a way off, that it would be premature to begin winding down our stimulus plans," Obama told a post-summit press conference.

And IMF Trade Organization chief Pascal Lamy said: "The worst of the crisis in social terms is still to come, which means that the worst of the crisis in political terms is still to come."

Other examples of seeing the glass half-empty or half-full were provided by two Switzerland groups, the International Energy Agency and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The IEA said: "Over the past two weeks the mood has suddenly changed, in many leading economic and energy industries, from to down very weak readings."

But the OECD reported the same day that some leading global economies showed signs of improvement in May, raising the chances of recovery.

Per capita analysis, the key factor in determining how things will go in a single word: ouch.

"The stark outlook is the main threat that may set now the anew recovery we expect into a worse one: credit tightens," Unicredit economists wrote.

Barclays Capital economist Thorsten Polleit told AFP: "Credit is drying up and it's very unlikely that it starts flowing again as easily around the globe as it did a couple of years ago," a phenomenon now seen as a principal cause of the crisis.

Germany's finance minister warned of a "very serious" threat of a credit crunch into this year and its economy minister added: "We must prepare for difficult times and we must do it very soon."

The European Central Bank will invest 60 billion euros ($84 billion) into low-risk corporate bonds to boost business finance, and banks have been warned they could be sidestepped here if necessary to ensure more credit gets to the overall economy.

On an individual level, Polleit said the end of the credit boom "is going to change the production structure of many economies substantially."

The economists explained that "by generating ever-greater doses of credit," the global monetary system fixed a "false interest impact on ... the kind of jobs that were created, on the kind of products people were buying."

He observed: "This is now subject to a correction." A global economy to nonetheless likely, though most analysts see terms such as fragile, modest or subdued in describes.

In Eastern Europe, which saw a chill somewhere when countries like Hungary pleaded for bailout funds last year, "the risk of many exporters has been dramatically reduced in the last few months," ING Global Insight economist Rolf Wenger told AFP.

"Some countries like Poland look pretty good" now, he said.

Banks are in better shape than after the US investment giant Lehman Brothers collapsed in mid-September, leading to massive aid and loans from governments and central banks, but little of the windfall cash has reached businesses.

"It is still unclear how the monetary stimulus is going to be passed on to consumers and investors," Deutsche Bank economist Gilles Moec told AFP.

A second key recovery factor was how governments managed stimulus packages, which have prevented the global recession from becoming a depression, he added.

"There's a very fine line for governments to walk" between allowing swollen public deficits to drive up long-term lending rates, and implementing "exit strategies" too soon and choking off growth. AFP

Study: Omega-3 is no match for Alzheimer's

CHICAGO—OMEGA-3 FATTY ACID SUPPLements did nothing to slow memory declines in people with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease, but a study in healthy people with slight memory complaints did show promise, US researchers said on Sunday.

The findings from one 18-month, government-backed study suggest taking supplements of docosahexaenoic acid, or DHA—an omega-3 fatty acid—does not arrest Alzheimer's in people who have already developed the mind-robbing disease.

"These trial results do not support the routine use of DHA for patients with Alzheimer's," Dr. Joseph Quinn of Oregon Health and Sciences University in Portland, who led the study, said in a statement.

But a six-month company study that looked at people who were memory was slightly less than "normal" for their age found DHA supplements helped restore some of the mental acuity they had lost.

"The benefit is roughly equivalent to having the learning and memory skills of someone three years younger," Harold Immanuel Suite Parke-Mason said in telephone interview. Reuters

Criticism of Afghan war on the rise in UK

LONDON—JUST AS President Barack Obama's plan to nearly double US troop strength in Afghanistan goes into high gear, Britain's involvement in the war has come under the fiercest criticism yet as home as a result of a steep increase in British casualties, including the deaths of 13 soldiers in the past five days.

The latest losses are the heaviest British forces have suffered in any comparable period since the 1982 Falklands War. With the Defense Ministry's announcement of eight soldiers' deaths on Friday, Britain's toll in Afghanistan is now 184, with five more than its total losses in Iraq, where British combat commitment ended this spring.

The deaths have generated grim images that have led the nightly television news, of three-ton transport aircraft carrying coffins landing at a military air base in Wiltshire and being driven slowly in procession through local villages, high street to Wootton Bassett, a nearby town. When the coffins passed down the street on Friday, as their way on a mortuary in Oxford, women wailed.

Britain's casualties are far lower than those suffered by US forces. But with Britain's far smaller population and troop deployments, the latest deaths—from a force of 9,000—have been as much of a shock here as the heavy US losses from its larger the height Afghanistan is now the conflict more to the United States.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has argued that Britain has to fight on in Afghanistan as a way of preventing terrorist attacks at home. The main opposition party, the Conservatives, have so far agreed. AFP

On trial, Suu Kyi tends a flickering flame

SUU KYI

NEAR KANGOON, BURMA—The morning mushroom cloth used clack in the small workshop where Ti Phyu watches Suu Lwin's chicks. Over the din she sometimes overhears her co-workers talking about Aung San Suu Kyi, the democracy leader whose trial awaits a verdict.

"I only know her name," said Ti Phyu, a slight and shy 20-year-old who says she has no idea what Suu Kyi looks like.

"I've never seen a picture of her," Ti Phyu said. "I think she's an old lady."

Outside Burma (Myanmar), the trial has energized dissident Burmese exiles, has moved some politicians in neighboring countries to issue rare criticism of Burma's (Myanmar) military government and has mobilized actors and rock stars to take up the cause of Suu Kyi, 64, the only living Nobel Peace Prize laureate currently in detention.

But in a waterlogged hamlet an hour's drive from the prison where Suu Kyi is being held, villagers are preoccupied with their own severe poverty and not only vaguely aware of her trial.

Having spent the better part of the past two decades confined to her home in Rangoon, now known as Yangon, Suu Kyi is up against a great deal to organize democratic change: a young generation that barely knows who she is; government-run media that portray her as a lackey of the West; and an educated elite that is eager for economic development but wary of more political confrontation after two decades of deadlock.

Not those old enough to remember the events of 1988, when Suu Kyi led protests against the military government, and two years later when she won an election in a landslide, she remains a powerful icon of democracy. Longtime foreign residents of Rangoon point out that sometimes almost Suu Kyi's relevance can not seen. In the early part of this decade, opponents speculated that she was no longer an important political force. But when she was released from house arrest in 2002, the mood the country and drew large, spontaneous, cheering crowds. She was reinvested as a true leader.

Testimony in her trial ended Friday. Lawyers say that she should know her fate soon, if convicted, she could face up to five years' imprisonment.

In could John William Nettsure, the American who says he swam to her lakeside house in an unannounced visit by swimming to her lakeside home and whose visit led to the charge that she violated the terms of her detention.

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queco

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Panetta: Cheney concealed secret CIA program

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE Agency withheld information about a secret counterterrorism program from Congress for eight years on direct orders from former Vice President Dick Cheney, the agency's director, Leon E. Panetta, has told the Senate and House intelligence committees, two people with direct knowledge of the matter said Saturday.

CHENEY

The report that Cheney was behind the decision to conceal the still-unidentified program from Congress deepened the mystery surrounding it, suggesting that the Bush administration had put a high priority on the program and its secrecy.

Panetta, who ended the program when he first learned of its existence from subordinates on June 23, briefed the two intelligence committees about it in separate closed sessions the next day.

Efforts to reach Cheney through relatives and associates were unsuccessful.

The law requires the president to make sure the intelligence committees "are kept fully and currently informed of the intelligence activities of the United States, including any significant anticipated intelligence activity," but the language of the statute, the amended National Security Act of 1947, leaves some leeway.

In addition, for covert action programs, a particularly secret category in which the role of the United States is hidden, the law says that briefings can be limited to the chairmen and Democratic leaders of both houses of Congress and of their intelligence committees.

The disclosure about Cheney's role in the unidentified CIA program comes a day after an inspector general's report underscored the central role of the former vice president's office in exercising on a small circle of officials knowledge of the National Security Agency's program of eavesdropping without warrants, a degree of secrecy that the report concluded hurt the effectiveness of the counterterrorism surveillance effort.

Intelligence and congressional officials have said the undisclosed program did not involve the CIA interrogation program and did not involve domestic intelligence activities. They have said the program was started by the counterterrorism center at the CIA shortly after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, but never became fully operational, involving planning and some training that took place sporadically from 2001 until this year.

"Because this program never went fully operational and hadn't been briefed as Panetta thought it should have been, his decision to kill it was neither difficult nor controversial," one intelligence official, who would speak about the classified program only on conditions of anonymity. "That's worth remembering amid all the drama."

AFP

Meralco shares best CSR and transformational leadership practices with the Kingdom of Bhutan. The Manila Electric Company (Meralco) recently hosted a study visit for representatives from the Ministry of Finance of the Kingdom of Bhutan on the company's best practices in corporate social responsibility and transformational leadership. The presentations covered many facets of Meralco advocacy to help the less fortunate and showcased how the power service provider inculcates the value of service and volunteerism in its executives, managers and employees. Standing, from left: Christopher Yap, Meralco Senior Manager and CSR Office Head; Sonaro Tenzin, Jr., Bhutan Finance Ministry Senior Accounts Officer and Accounts Section Head; Miguel L. Lopez, Meralco Vice President and Corporate Marketing Head; Jun Narciso, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Development Finance Institute (DFI) Administration Director; and Ritzi Villarica Ronquillo, Meralco Senior Manager and Program Officer for General Public Programs, Marketing Programs. Seated, from left: Vivian Arnobit, Meralco Senior Manager and MMLDC Academic Services Director; Chering Peldon, Sr., Bhutan Finance Ministry Accounts Officer and Accounts Section Head; Yangchen Chhoedon, Bhutan Finance Ministry Chief HRO, HRD; and Maette Bilran, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' DFI Program Director

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Kerr on course for second US Open triumph
/A30

Editor Teddyboy S. Molmedoy ● Assistant Editor Francis T. Ochoa

SPORTS

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Eagles survive pesky Tamaraws

Al-Hussaini stars in battle of title favorites; Bulldogs clobber Maroons

By Jasmine W. Paya

ATENEO'S CRACK GUARDS POUNDED UP the Blue Eagles early before the veterans finished off the pesky Far Eastern U Tamaraws with a 83-79 victory in the 72nd UAAP men's basketball tourney yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Eagles moved to Rabeh Al-Hussaini in the final seconds and the reigning MVP responded with a pair of key baskets that pushed the defending champions ahead for good at 81-76 from a 54-54 deadlock.

"It showed why everybody is picking FEU as the team to beat," said Ateneo coach Norman Black. "We played well in the first half, but they came out with better intensity in the second half. Luckily we just kept our composure and kept our defense."

Al-Hussaini finished with 18 points and eight rebounds and last year's top rookie Ryan Buenafe contributed 18.

"We came into the game knowing we're playing the toughest team, so this is a big win for us, a confidence booster," added Black.

While the Eagles leaned on their veterans, rookie came through for National University as the Bulldogs downed the ever-green University of the Philippines Maroons, 74-64, in the first game.

Joseph Hermosisima, a 5-foot-10 rookie from Davao, knocked in all of his 12 points in the second the set to help the Bulldogs turn an early 10-18 deficit into a 53-44 lead in the third period.

An Aldrich Ramos three-point play and a Jed Catapusan bucket from the low post moved the Tamaraws within 66-59 before a Buenafe free throw made it 68-59 with 13:43 remaining.

The Tamaraws tried to forge an extra period, but rookie Ryan Buenafe's triple try rimmed out at the buzzer.

The Eagles shot an impressive 50 percent in the first half, making 7-of-10 attempts from three-point range, as they built a commanding 41-29 advantage.

But with Ramos and Mark Barroca taking over after the break, the Tamaraws roared back with a 13-0 spurt to tie the game at 44.

EAGLES 4.0

Resurgent Red Lions, Blazers square off today

By Cedelf F. Tupas

DEFENDING CHAMPION SAN BEDA AND St. Benilde try to stay close behind the leaders when they collide today in the 80th NCAA men's basketball tournament at the FilOil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Although both teams are identical 2-1 marks, the Red Lions, with a deeper and more talented roster, are favored in the 2 p.m. game.

Mapua and Letran, both with 3-2 cards, clash in the second twenty-match at 4 p.m.

San Beda coach Frankie Lim said underestimating St. Benilde is a recipe for disaster.

"We can't take them lightly," Lim said. "With the kind of team we have, we cannot play on a lower level and expect to win. We need to come out with our A game all the time."

After breezing to San Sebastian, 77-65, the Red Lions, who are seeking a fourth straight 9-0, plastered the Arellano Chiefs, 102-74, last Monday as Enrico Lanete led five other Lions in double figures with 20 points.

Lim believes their winning game, which they executed to near perfection against Arellano and Mapua, will be a key factor against the Blazers, who are hoping to rebound from a 62-75 decision over the Lions.

"Dan Ilon hailed the Blazers' two wins ran.

With the departures of top players, the Tamaraws said the Bonifacio family feels the losses that made the Final Four last season.

But Lemi coach Louie Alas said the Cardinals cannot be easily dismissed even without former league MVP Nelvin dela Peña, Neil Olivera and Ian Mam.

"They're struggling but they're still a tough team. We have to be focused against them," said Alas, whose team snapped a two-game slide with a 73-67 win over Perpetual Help.

Mapua coach Chito Victolero also acknowledged Letran's resiliency. "Letran is always a tough team and that's because of its openness and defensive intensity. It's going to be a hard game for us," said Victolero.

The Cardinals are fresh off the most one-sided win of the season—a 101-62 flogging of the Angeles University Foundation.

Mamiit & Co. brace for tie vs tougher NZ

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WITH PAKISTAN OUT OF THE WAY, THE Philippine Davis Cup team braces for a tougher tie against New Zealand in their Asia-Oceania duel for promotion to Group I this September in Manila.

Cecil Mamiit, the RP squad's 35-year-old hoary cord man, yesterday predicted no "cross match" against the Kiwis, who also surged to an unsurmountable 3-0 lead over Indonesia by taking the doubles match Saturday.

"They are a different team from the one we played two years ago, and I have seen them play in tournaments," added Mamiit, who on Saturday teamed up with fellow Filipino-American Treat Huey in securing the tie against Pakistan.

The Pakistanis salvaged some measure of pride by winning the no-bearing reverse singles yesterday to set the Filipinos' winning score to their Group 2 semifinal duel at 3-2.

Jalil Khan survived six match points to rout hard-hitting Casey Almonte, 1-6, 7-6 (8), 6-3, while Aqeel Khan beat Jeff Ibarra, 6-2, 7-6 (7).

Almonte, the youngest RP bet at 17, led 5-4 in the second set but couldn't finish off Jalil, who also nailed 3-0 in the tiebreak before pulling through, 9-7, to force the third set.

The Philippines whipped New Zealand, 4-1, in Auckland in their last meeting in 2007 but the Kiwis have a new team this time.

New Zealand now leans on Rai King Furner and 123 Joses, who joined hands in giving the Kiwis an unbeatable 3-0 lead over Indonesia in Pasadena.

"I know them guys," Mamiit said. "They play on hardcourts. Maybe if we can take the decisive [RCS doubles rubber] and, with the home-town crowd cheering for us, we can have a great tie."

King-Rajeev and Statham, both in the top 100 of the world rankings, boast of Fromm singles title and four doubles championships between them.

Mamiit and Huey outwhelmed Ghaz and Jibran Muhammad in the doubles Saturday night, 6-2, 6-4, 6-0, to clinch the tie for the host country.

The Cebuana Lhuillier-RP Davis Cup team surge to a 2-0 lead by taking Friday's singles.

Huey opened the country's campaign with a 6-4, 7-5, 6-2 victory over Aqeel Khan before Mamiit, who is the country's all-time ace, outlasted Jalil Khan, 6-1, 6-2, 6-1.

PJ TERRO hits a backhand return to Aqeel Khan of Pakistan.

Japan lady freestyle wrestlers nail 3 golds

JAPAN SHOWED ITS STRENGTH IN WRESTLING wrestling with its ladies team routing three of the six gold medals at stake yesterday in the Asian Junior Championships at the Philsports Arena in Pasig City.

Saori Ishii (56kg) delivered the first gold for the Japanese after she overpowered Vietnamese Nguyen Thi Le in their 60-kilogram clash.

Ayaka Oyama and Shiori Tanbou also triumphed for Japan over an 0-34 of China, Dalijin Yakhyaevna of Kazakhstan and Nomindari Batsuragge of Mongolia ended the three other gold medals.

Japan smashed Xiao Thi Minh of Vietnam in the finals of the 72-kg class while Tanbou prevailed in the 63-kg division at the expense of Gankuu Tsuvsuvnemey of Mongolia.

Li removed Akhbirjon Sirmatovich of Kyrgyzstan in the 44-kg finals, Bakhyaivna outclassed Sudar Gargi of India for the 55-kg gold while Batsuragge seized the 204-kg gold over Suzuki Mahi of Japan.

The three golds by Japan were the most by any country so far in the event hosted by the Philippine Sports Commission chaired by Harry Angping and backed by Senate Pimentel and Congr. Teresa Aquino-Oreta.

The scores (medals): 44 kg.—Sophiane Sportsmen (Kyrgyzstan) def. Gargi Sudar (India), 3-1; 48 kg.—Chaudhary Sonia def. Nitish Subramanian (Malaysia), 11-0; 55—Nitish Subramanian def. Sit Ing Mooni (Hong Kong), 3-1; 60—Nguyen Thi Le (Vietnam) def. Saori Ishii (Japan), 3-1; 63—Ayaka Oyama (Japan) def. Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy (Vietnam), 3-1; 72—Xiao Thi Minh (Vietnam) def. Shiori Tanbou (Japan), 10-0; 204—Suzuki Mahi (Japan) def. Batsuragge Tsevel (Mongolia), 3-1.

SPORTSWATCH

VACATION BONUS. Fransico Mimosa hoists his trophy after ruling the ICTSI-Pueblo de Oro Championship, fourth leg of a 10-stage circuit put up by the International Container Terminal Services, Inc., with a one-stroke victory on Friday over Richard Sinfuego at Pueblo de Oro Golf and Country Club in Cagayan de Oro. Mimosa, who took over alltown the japanese pro tour, is joined in the photo by Rebel Lucero, ICTSI terminal manager, and Pueblo de Oro golf operation manager Mari Gamos.

Romero, Barredo head Forum guests

PI-SUPREME BASKETBALL LEGEND DAVID MIKEE ROMERO HEADS the guests list in tomorrow's session of the PSA Forum at Shakey's Malate branch in Manila.

The owner of the multimillion Harbour Centre franchise will discuss at the public sports program, aired live over dzSR Sports Radio 990, the country's qualification in the inaugural Association of Southeast Asian Nations Basketball League.

Mike Barredo, president of the Philippine Sports Association for the Differently Abled athletes, is also joining the program sponsored by Shakey's, Anyos, Pagcor and Subic Bay to talk about next month's Asean Para Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The other guests are Philippine Ice Skating Union president Nicanor Perlas, Jr. and Philippine Taekwondo Association president Ricardo Blumea, Universal Reality Combat Championship (URCC) president and founder Alvin Aguilar, Dutch-Filipino manager Leny Aronson and fighter Hardred Lucero.

Single Ladies 4-cocker fires off at SJC

A GUARANTEED PRIZE OF P100,000 AWAITS THE WINNER OF the Single Ladies 4-cock derby today at the San Juan Coliseum.

Entry fee is P5,000 and the cut P5,000.

The tournament's lady drafters, led by Prissy Ann Arlos, Linda Lee and Rosie, are trending the event in competition with SJC pit manager Romulo Sitoy.

Hard cut at the arena is the Golden Harvest and Annex 4-Cock Derby on July 19 hosted by Atty. Tex and friends, the Big Event 7-Cock Derby on July 22 and the Clip Kids Concepts 3-cocker on July 23.

The P2-million Pambansa 8-Cock Derby kicks off at SJC on July 27, 28, Aug. 1, 3 and 5.

Boxing invading the UAAP?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo B. Mejia

THE ATHLETIC HIERARCHY OF FAR EASTERN University took off this year's 72 season of the University Athletic Association of the Philippines, it was against the inclusion of amateur boxing to the UAAP sports calendar.

"But because it refuses to do the approval of the UAAP board," said Mark Molina, the hard-working amateur director of FEU. "And even if the board accepts amateur boxing, it will not be held this year but in future seasons."

Molina added that it is the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, the ruling body for the sport in the country, that could make the best and most logical endorsement before the UAAP board.

I agree.

In my view, the inclusion of amateur boxing on the UAAP sports menu could help beef up the country's quest to finally win one first Olympic gold.

The Philippines came close to winning that elusive Olympic gold for the first time in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games when 18-year-old 1951 amateur Anthony Villanueva narrowly lost to Mexico's Joaquin Snapshot in their bantyweight final bout.

Despondent, said Villanueva was robbed of a sure gold.

More than three decades later, in the 1996 Atlanta Games to the exact, Mamanto "Onyok" Wharto also won a silver. Although Mamanto lost to Bulgaria's Daniel Petrov Bojilov in their light flyweight final match, the decision was controversial to the crowd.

Other Filipino boxing medalists of recent Olympic Games were Roger Mercado (silver, Munich 1972), Leopoldo Serrantes (1988 Seoul, bronze).

Why am I rambling with amateur boxing? It's simply because I have high respect for the people who run it. They care about the boxers and unlike every insurance or corporate the safety of the young men and women under them. And unlike in professional boxing, there are no gifts, tongued, greedy and scheming promoters/managers to deal with.

Right now, the stage is preparing three national teams that will rule by China, the United States and Cuba, the hotbed of amateur boxing. Executive Director Al Nicol was quoted as saying that the team will be leaving for the World Boxing Championships in Milan, Italy, on Sept. 1-12 and the 25th Southeast Asian Games in Laos starting Dec. 6.

He added that the two teams will train in China as part of the sports partnership program forged between PSC chair Harry Angping and his Chinese counterpart, while the other two will further hone their skills in the US and Cuba.

Amateur boxers from the Far Eastern University, National University and the Armed Forces of the Philippines use to dominate the 1990s. But FEU fighters dismiss brightest.

Under lively coach Celestino "Tolling" Delos Reyes, the club has support of FEU-Sparkle Mikaela "Boxing" Mayor and his brother, Mikedo "Ding" Reyes, and ring prodders Eugenio "Gene" Pinpin, the school cumberland enemy of the country's outstanding Olympians and Asian Games boxers.

FEU produced its only one-first Olympic silver medalists in Villanueva, but other several Asian champions as well. Among them were 1954 Manila host Carmen Jose) medal winner Jovenia Sajo, Alejandro Gervacio, Celedonio Espinosa, Francisco Guevara and Nestor Tamerosa, Manfredo Alpuerto, 1962 Jakarta, Ricardo Lopez, 1966 Bangkok, and Ricardo Bautista, 1970 Bangkok.

TEAM USA celebrates its victory over Greece in the finals.

US five wins Fiba U-19 world championship

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND— The United States broke an 18-year gold medal drought when it beat Greece, 88-81, Sunday to win the Fiba under-19 world basketball championship.

Tyshawn Taylor had 16 points and five steals to lead the US to its first victory at the world junior tournament since it claimed the gold medal in Canada in 1993.

"It was a tough game. Greece played it in boxers out but I think in the end we wanted it more," Taylor said.

The teams were tied 39-39 after the first quarter but the US gained a crucial break with an outstanding defensive performance in the second period, outscoring Greece 27-11 to lead 46-38 at halftime.

Greece, host Australia, 87-81, to claim the bronze medal, while Argentina beat Puerto Rico, 93-75, to finish fifth. AP

Two youth shooters earn Bangkok training

AFTER SURPASSING THE OLYMPIC YOUTH Games qualifying score together with three other Filipino shooters, Jayson Valdez and Jeanne Nicole Dalonzo were rewarded with a two-week stint in a training camp in Bangkok next month.

"They deserve the trip," said shooting supervisor and National Youth Development Program chair Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla of the training grant given to Valdez and Dalonzo by the Asian Shooting Confederation.

Valdez, a Mabini Colledo School student, posted 566 points in the 10-meter air rifle to breach the 592 qualifying score, while Dalonzo, 17, tallied 385 in the women's 10-meter rifle event to top the 368 qualifying score.

Gonzales, 19, and Dalonzo, 16, shot 384 and 380 in the women's 10-meter air pistol to surpass the 355 qualifying mark. Meanwhile, Brad Tito shot the men's 10-meter air rifle to handle the 580 qualifying score.

Gaw bombs out in Vegas

FILIPINO ANDREW GAW FAILED to sustain his run and hit the rail in the closing minutes of Level 15 yesterday, ending his bid in the $50,000 World Series of Poker Main Event at the Rio All-Suites Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Gaming is as one of the chip leaders, Gaw, whose campaign is backed by The Metro Card Club, tried to protect his 395,000 chips until he suffered the late meltdown. He busted out in the 848 slumot 39 spots (6,459 overall) 39.

Asian Poker Tour titlist Neil Aire went out on Day 2 in the race for the host's share of $8,346,423 from the total pot of $30,243,000.

This title series is tough

HEARTS, SOUL, SPORTS

Tonny Manotoc

AGAINST ALL ODDS, THE defending champ Air21 forward Jun Magsil Jose and Barangay Ginebra San Miguel guard Jayjay Helterbrand are proving to be very entertaining. That despite the fact that the two teams belong to separate conferences.

The series has had everything, and we've witnessed rookie outbursts both fake and physical alike.

The resurgence of "Mr. Cool," Mike Cortez, one of the country's most gifted point guards, has been a joy to watch.

Ginebra's David West has shown at first unimpressive) not to be a ball hog.

I must say that, based on the results of the first four games, the best is yet to come.

* * *

But can regular season roaring finishers conquer better performances from the playoff and the brackets of the two star-studded teams.

It is the fourth tantalizing, though, who will ultimately determine the outcome of the series. How the coaches master his players in a long drawn-out series will spell the difference between winning and losing.

Down the stretch, the coaches' defensive creations and offensive patterns in the game's final minutes will decide the result of the series.

* * *

The health of key players of both teams will also come into play.

How Jayjay Helterbrand's injury jammed toe in the first day will be. Would it ask that to a lack of a big name will be crucial in Ginebra's drive.

That break gave Helterbrand a few more days to rest that aching thigh, that how serious is his injury?

Safe to say Helterbrand is one man who can make or break the team.

* * *

Ginebra Joaq Uldaize of Gladiola and Gin Kings/guy of Jun Magsil are both tender pressure to win if only because their respective companies are the best in the market.

Fans what I've seen so far, though, three serious as he lent my support in the Ginebra system.

Uldaize, for one, publicly admitted that it was the advice of Helterbrand to put Schlitz Milano on Jay Washington that turned Game 2 around.

* * *

I've always believed that the participation of every team member helps ensure success.

When I was still coaching, I always circled any post-game huddles by asking my players if they had anything to say about the game or if they had any suggestions for the next.

Coaches can only do so much. Every game has its own limitations and things happen on the floor in site on one mind alone is not enough.

But it is much can put together everyone's thoughts and that's it, gets them quickly, he might be able to see solutions that he alone could not have considered.

* * *

I may be wrong (but the loud gun-Ginebra crowd can help) crowd reference calls.

The last call made by referees in the last five minutes of Game 4 had our jumping up my seat. Even the sportscasters said it should have been a turnoff.

That one rewarded David West three free throws, which he all missed, allowing Jun Magsil to march to the game.

It was a call that had no place in such a very close game.

Players and coaches look for consistency in the way the referees call the calls. You don't ordinarily call it strictly in the endgame after you have delivered physical contact in the beginning of the game.

Please send comments to: sportsmanship@yahoo.com

ATOMIC gun-d Kirk Long looks for an open teammate as he comes under pressure from Andy Barroca of PBA. —ALEX BADAYOS

Eagles survive ...

From page A27

The Bulldogs held the Maroons' scoreless in a four-minute stretch at the start of the fourth quarter to pull away by 20 points at 75-55.

"We knew their weaknesses and took advantage of that," said coach Nhoray Tiongco after his Bulldogs forced the Maroons to commit 17 turnovers.

Over at the PBSI Flying V Arena in San Juan, Gerpe Ucpalo buried 29 points as La Salle Zobel trounced defending champion Ateneo, 80-56, at the end of high school action.

Capanto, the 6-3 son of 1992 runner Glenn, also had 11 rebounds and four blocks.

Earlier, the University of the East Negre blasted the UP Junior Maroons, 80-56.

The early score

First Game

UE 80 – Bienvenida 15, Gego 12, Pambid-an 10, Mabulac 10, Cap 7, Salut 5, Ramos 5, Lim-Ji 4, Mejia 3, Vito 3, Magat 3, Salcedo 2, Calabroso 2

UP 56 – Ucpalo 29, Tiongco 14, Miguel 6, Lopez 5, De la Cruz 4, Mantaay 3, Mabulac 2, Reyes 2, Jumawan 2, Bergancia 0, Gonzalez 0, Arellano 0

Quarters: 19-15, 38-30, 53-44, 75-55

Second Game

ATENEO 80 – Al-Ghazzawi 18, Sumalpong 15, Tolentino 12, Sandejas 10, Mendoza 8, Reyes 7, Lucero 5, Cabahug 3, Cruz 2, Ramirez 1, Cabahug 0

LA SALLE 56 – Capanto 11, Barroca 9, Bautista 9, Salvo 8, Dimaliwat 6, Cipriano 5, Garcia 3, Arcadio 2, Fernandez 2, Tigulo 1, Cabagay 0

Quarters: 13-11, 40-28, 60-41, 80-56

PIVOTAL GAME 5

Beermen, Gin Kings break tie

By Hussyn B. Cuerillo

ALREADY IN THE BOOKS WITH ITS SHARE OF TWISTS AND turns, the Honda/Air PBA Fiesta Cup title series singers its crucial fifth game on an odd day today.

Buoyed has Magsaysay and defending champion Barangay Ginebra San Miguel (both 2-2 deadlock at 7 p.m. with both sides looking to grab the inside track on what has now become a best-of-three series for the season-ending crown at the Araneta Coliseum.

GAME TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
7 p.m. — Barangay Ginebra vs San Miguel

The winner eventually gets a foot inside the championship door since 19 of 20 teams that came through after a 2-2 tie in a best-of-seven series were all the way.

The Beermen will come into the match carrying the momentum of a 126-104 Game 4 victory, which coach Siot Tanquingcen didn't get to fully appreciate after barely savoring what he said was another bone-dry of difficulty.

"I'll be honest, we've not getting any breaks from the referees," Tanquingcen said Friday night. "We've always in foul trouble. It's human nature (for the refs) to play to the (caliber) of the crowd."

"Everybody knew it was underdog (Ginebra)," he added. "Nobody out there in his right mind (including the refs) would say that he (does not love the underdog)."

Ginebra coach Jong Uichico refused to rant, though, on Tanquingcen's level about the officiating. He is expected to employ his usually his same game plan that almost carried the Gin Kings through in Game 4.

"It could have been 3-1," Uichico said. "We know it wasn't going to be easy. It (now we) had a shot (at winning the games). We have a few days' rest. Hopefully we could recover from this loss and come back Monday ready to do battle again."

The playoffs took a break from its regular schedule at the Big Dome to give way to WPBL wrestling last Friday and to the several playdates of the 72nd UAAP season's festivities.

The Kings may not get a superb game from MVP Jayjay Helterbrand, however, after the superstar guard was recalled to the bench in the final four minutes of Game 4 because of recurring pains in his left hamstring.

He is leaving Helterbrand to sip cup dregs could prove fatal for Ginebra, whose main edge against San Miguel is in backcourt.

Line-up of Scorekeepers:

SPORTS

SANCHEZ dedicates win to late brother

Spaniard takes 8th stage; Nocentini still ahead

SAINT-CHRIST-EN-OISANS, FRANCE—LUIS LEON Sanchez of Spain won a sprint between four breakaway riders to capture Saturday's eighth stage of the Tour de France, while Lance Armstrong retained third overall.

Rinaldo Nocentini of Italy kept the yellow jersey for a second day by finishing in the pack along with seven-time winner Armstrong and Astana teammates Alberto Contador, who set early accents back.

Sanchez, who won the Paris-Nice stage race in March, pointed skyward and tapped his chest after he crossed the line just ahead of France's Sandy Casar and Mikel Astarloza of Spain.

They clocked 4 hours, 31 minutes, 36 seconds for the 176.5-kilometer (110-mile) trek along three big climbs from the Pyrenean principality of Andorra to Saint-Girons, France.

"This was meant to have luck," said Sanchez, who also won a Tour stage last year. He dedicated his victory to his older brother, Leon, who died in a quad bike accident two years ago.

Overall, Nocentini retained his six-second lead over 2007 winner Contador, and remaining in eight seconds back. Astana rider Levi Leipheimer is fourth, 39 seconds back. AP

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Kerr on course for second US Open triumph

KERR's game plan: Play smart

BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA— 22-YEAR-OLD Cristie Kerr, seeking her second US Women's Open title in three years, fired a nine-over par 73 on Saturday and stretched her lead to two strokes after the third round.

Kerr stood on two-under par 211 after 54 holes in the third major women's golf championship of the season with South Korea's Eun Hee Ji second on 213, one stroke ahead of Taiwan's Teresa Lu and American Jean Reynolds.

"I feel like I played great," Kerr said. "I had a couple opportunities for birdies that just didn't quite go in. I feel calm. I'm not nervous. I know what I've got to do tomorrow and I'm just going to go out and do it."

Ji and Lu each fired a third-round 70 on Saturday while Reynolds had a 74 and American Paula Creamer, second to Kerr by one stroke when the day began, tumbled out of contention with a 79.

Kerr took a bogey in the par-4 second but stationed with a birdie at the par-5 fourth. She took a bogey at the par-3 ninth to deprive the back side even, following a birdie at the par-4 15th with a bogey at the par-4 16th.

Kerr, a 12-time winner on the LPGA Tour who won the 2007 title, said it will be important to continue to play smart and even-tempered golf on the difficult course set up by the US Golf Association.

"I feel I need, no this course set, it's also about eliminating mistakes as much as it is making birdies," Kerr said.

Taiwan's Candie Kung and South Korean duo Young Park and In-Kyung Kim were five adrift on 216, one stroke ahead of Korean Kyeong Bae. Norway's Suzann Pettersen and American Brittany Lincicome AFP

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CARRYBOY

German GP: Bourdais confident

SILVERSTONE, GERMANY—SEBASTIEN Bourdais isn't worried about keeping his Toro Rosso seat, despite reports that Sébastien Loeb or team reserve driver Jaime Alguersuari could replace him. Bourdais had a poor qualifying session for the German Grand Prix and will start 18th on the grid. AP

Putra Cup q'fying resumes

THE PAGE FOR FOUR BERTHS TO THE national team competing in Putra Cup next month resumes today at Riviera Arapal course in Silang, Cavite with ICTSI boy Arnaiz Jumbo and Dalton Bayron hoping to hold on to the top two spots.

Arnie battled it over the 18-man field in the first half of the 108-hole qualifier at 9H. Malaysian for last week, posting a seven-under 209 round for three days and a one-shot lead over Bayron.

Bayron assembled a 211 as he remained in contention for another stint with the 10P squad out to end by long side drought to salute in the event known as the Southeast Asian Golf Team Championships slated Aug. 10 to 15 in Thailand.

Jhomel Abalos, another former ISP team mainstay, rolled with a 68 in the third round at 9H. Makiwan to tie Peter Villaber for third place at 215.

Reigning national champion Mhark Fernando remained in the mix at 218, followed by youthful John Her 40does at 219 going into the last 54 holes.

Jhem Beckett closed at 224.

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Davao's Dugos, Miranda score breakthrough wins

DAVAO CITY—JOSELITO DUGOS MADE this province proud while Jocelyn Miranda finally came out a victor here as they ruled the 33rd National Milo triathlon 21K elimination at the Riad Park.

In another elimination leg in Toribo City, however, the Eastern University standout Abraham Barcarse Jr. was the lone male qualifier while Anna Vergara made it back-to-back in the distaff side.

Dugos, who could only place third in 2007 and 2008, pulled away in the final five kilometers and breasted the tape in one hour, 15 minutes and 42 seconds.

The graduating criminology student of Holy Cross of Davao College had a difficult time shaking off Rafael Poliquit of Marikel and Noel Bautista of Dagum.

"We were just changing positions for most part of the race and I got lucky in the homestretch," said Dugos, 21.

Poliquit came in seven seconds behind while Bautista submitted 1:15:56 for third place in Elevation under Basilo riders.

Miranda, 24, clocked 1:31:27, in impressive from her 1:32:31 winning feat in the Bureau City leg last year. Previously, she was runner-up here three times.

Runner-up Caroline Frijlink of Belgium, a member of international charity organization Voluntary Service Overseas and local non-governmental organization Kinnara Fund for Research in Mindanao (Affair), also clinched a Beale slot with a time of 1:39:33.

Third placer Nathaira Pimentel is not coming to the Gre. 33 national finals in Manila with her 1:32:10 finish.

The qualifying mark was set at one hour and 35 minutes for men and one hour and 55 minutes for women. The equestrians pocketed P10,000 each.

Apart native Barcarse once unchallenged and recorded 1:08:52, slightly slower than his personal best of 1:08 recorded in 2007.

Vergara bested all female participants with a time of 1:26:36, May Benedicto was second in 1:28.48 and last qualifier Marella Tebon submitted 1:29:37.

Standings shift to Butuan and Santiago cities next Sunday.

ABRAHAM Barcarse Jr. (left) crosses the Toribo City finish line unopposed. At right, Davao winners Joselito Dugos and Jocelyn Miranda display their trophies during the awarding rites

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RP banks stay healthy as bad debts decline

CIRCULO VERDE
Ortigas & Co. has embarked on its first medium-rise-rise project in Cubi Industria, Bagumbayan, Quezon City, delivering on its promise to start development of a green 12-hectare residential community that evolve with nature.

For 8th straight month, NPL ratio remains below 4%

By Michelle V. Rama

THE BANKING SECTOR REMAINS FINANCIALLY SOUND as most institutions' exposure to bad debts and level of capital are well within comfortable levels, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

According to BSP data, nonperforming loans (NPL) ratio of universal and commercial banks stood at 3.74 percent as of end-May. The central bank said the latest NPL ratio—the proportion of unpaid loans or banks' total loans portfolio—went down from 4.17 percent in same month last year, but was up from 3.65 percent as of end-April.

"This is the eighth consecutive month that the NPL ratio has been below 4 percent," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

Data showed that the latest NPL ratio was a result of P90.69 billion worth of nonperforming loans against total loan portfolio of P2.4 trillion.

If inter-bank loans were excluded, NPL ratio of banks stood at 4.26 percent as of end-May, down from last year's level of 4.98 percent, but up from the previous month's 4.21 percent.

Tetangco said that, despite the evil grip of the financial panic in the United States and other advanced economies, the spillover to the Philippine banking sector was minimal partly because of measures implemented following the Asian financial crisis of 1997.

Since the late 1990s, he said, banks in the country adhered to prudent lending practices guided by appropriate regulation.

BF BANKS B4

NGCP to invest ₱30B in power grid projects

By Jerry R. Barros

THE NATIONAL GRID CORP. OF the Philippines (NGCP), operator of the country's electricity superhighway, will invest close to P30 billion over the next three years to modernize projects covering the three main power grids.

These projects are expected to help develop and improve the power transmission network in the country to keep up with growing demand.

Data from NGCP showed that, for the period 2009 to 2012, NGCP plans to invest P9.35 billion in the Luzon grid, P9.21 billion in Visayas and P13.32 billion in the Mindanao grid.

NGCP president Walter W. Brown had said that such transmission projects are part of the company's effort to upgrade and expand the power grids, at the same time align their operations and maintenance practices with global standards.

The upgrade of transformers and facilities is part of the company's Transmission Master plan, which is currently under development.

For 2009 alone, NGCP has identified 11 priority transmission projects, of which two are in Luzon, four in Visayas and five in Mindanao.

These projects form part of the NGCP's mandate as official operator of the state-owned National Transmission Corp., with the right to operate, manage and maintain the transmission grid for the next 25 years.

In Luzon, some of these priority projects included the "Mariveles coal mass-fired and complementary transmission line project" and the "Luzon substation expansion projects I."

In the Visayas, NGCP is working on several replacement projects for its 138-kilovolt power circuit breakers (PCBs) at Amlan and Mabinay in Negros Oriental and in Bacolod, among others.

In Mindanao, NGCP will undertake several PCB replacement projects at Sangali, Iligan, Lugait, Tacurong, Kidapawan, Sumera, Balingi and Gen. Santos.

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Dissecting inflation data

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

THE ANNUAL INFLATION RATE of 3.3 percent posted in June was the lowest the country has seen in 22 years. This implies that consumer prices as a whole have shown remarkable stability over the past year. For the year so far, the average over the first half was 3 percent, which is lower than the full-year average for 2008 of 9.3 percent, but higher than the 2007 figure of 2.8 percent.

Detailed highlights

The record low year-on-year inflation rate should be generally good news for consumers. But as is true with economic data of this sort, there is more than meets the eye by just looking at the aggregate numbers. The following are some noteworthy highlights regarding the latest inflation data:

- It was mainly the price drop (negative inflation) in the commodity group of fuel, light and water (FLW) that led to the very low overall inflation rate for the month.
- On a year-on-year basis, food prices have risen the fastest among the commodity groups, implying that inflation still hits the poor faster than the non-poor.
- The inflation pattern manifests as far lopsided in favor of Metro Manila, where unrealized prices had actually gone down while rising elsewhere in the country.
- Prices actually rose faster in June, if measured on a month-to-month basis.

Fuel and food

One only needs to recall that the world price of crude oil reached its record high of $147.27 per barrel exactly one year ago—and which has since gone down to less than half that level—to understand the negative inflation in FLW of -3.4 percent. The price of gasoline shot into P60 per liter then, but is now back down to about P36. What may be puzzling is why the decline in the price index was only that much, when the price of oil, which is the dominant component in energy cost, had dropped by so much more, by as much as 50 percent.

Other commodity groups (food, beverages and tobacco; clothing, housing and repairs; and miscellaneous) actually posted significant year-on-year price increases (ranging from 2.5 to 5.1 percent).

Like FLW, services also posted a negative inflation of -1.1 percent. What concerns one is that the food, beverages and tobacco category—the most prominent item in the budgets of poor families—still had the lowest price hike (3.1 percent). We can tell from this that inflation, while showing down as a whole, continues to take a heavier toll on those among us with the least purchasing power.

In fact, considering that those most likely to benefit from the fall in price deflation are the higher-income ones entering bonfire, then one might say that inflation has been lopsided against the poor and in favor of the rich.

Metro Manila bias

The other lopsidedness coming out of the more detailed numbers is how Metro Manila has emerged better off (with lower overall prices) while the rest of the country was worse off (with higher prices).

The June inflation rate of 1.5 percent was actually the average of a -0.1 percent rate for Metro Manila and a 2.2 percent rate for areas outside Metro Manila.

Taking it down to commodity level, a similar Metro Manila bias emerges. Price of services actually fell 6.1 percent in Metro Manila, but rose 2 percent in the provinces. Food prices went up faster in the countryside (3.3 percent) than in Metro Manila (2.4 percent). Clothing prices went up more than twice as fast in the countryside (2 percent) compared to Metro Manila (1.3 percent). Housing and repairs went up 3 percent in the countryside, but only 2.5 percent in Metro Manila; and miscellaneous commodities went up 2.9 percent in the countryside, against 2.3 in the capital.

The pattern suggests a need for more affirmative action in favor of the countryside in government undertakings anti-inflation measures, such as targeted subsidies. Or have we just become so used to underplaying political issues—why politically noisy Metro Manila gets disproportionate attention—even in anti-inflation measures—as to mention infrastructure spending and other public investments.

Twice as fast

Finally, it may be pointed out that the record low year-on-year inflation rate was simply the result of a "base effect," that is, last year's price level, pushed up by record oil prices, was so unusually higher base on which to compare the percentage change in prices. But if one reckons the inflation rate from the previous month (May to June), prices actually rose more than twice as fast (0.6 percent) as the average monthly rise over the past year (0.27 percent).

This would explain why the Bangko Sentral is getting increasingly cautious about further easing up on money supply by further lowering interest rates, down to zero, the private sector to borrow and invest more and thereby boost the flagging economy. The BSP is again beginning to fret that deficit-driven "ballooning" set by ravens inducing growth and taming inflation, and given its mandate provided by law, it is the latter that must take primacy.

Comments welcome at chabito@inters.ph.

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NOTICE OF MEETING
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

To ALL PICPA Members:

In accordance with the provisions of Article XIII, Section 1 and 2 of the By-Laws of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants, notice is hereby given that the Annual Membership Meeting will be on Friday, July 24, 2009 at 1:00 pm at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Publication of Notice of Meeting
3. Certification as to Presence of Quorum
4. Reading and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
5. Business Arising from the Minutes
6. Report of the President
7. Report of the Treasurer
8. New Business
9. Determination of the place of the next annual meeting
10. Adjournment

We urge all members to attend the Annual Membership Meeting. For members who cannot be present in person, please accomplish and return to us the general proxy form. The general proxy form can be downloaded from the PICPA website www.picpa.com.ph or can be obtained from the PICPA National and Chapter Offices.

Melvin D. Miguel
National Secretary

BPO companies eyeing nontraditional markets

By Abigail L. Ho

THE COUNTRY'S BUSINESS PROCESS outsourcing sector may soon play host to more nontraditional clients, as companies from several parts of the world consider offshoring to relieve costs.

Jennifer Hernandez, president of the Contact Center Association of the Philippines, said countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore and Canada were increasingly considering offshoring options.

With the Philippines' good reputation in the global BPO industry, he said these nascent markets were showing growing interest in bringing business into the country.

"We're on the proof-of-concept stage here. It will still take some time to build a critical mass of awareness among those new markets," he said. "It will probably take another two years to develop those markets. I usually take three years, and we're now on the first year, so we have two more years to go."

If the country would be able to penetrate the non-United States market, he said Philippine-based BPO providers could gain access to about 50 percent of the $4-billion global market for contact center services.

In the meantime, CCAP executive director Jenelen Ulipas said the Philippines had also begun to catch the eye of small and medium businesses in the US that had just started to realize the benefits of outsourcing and offshoring.

"More companies that have never considered outsourcing before are now looking at offshoring," he said. "The SMB sector in the US is growing, and companies from that sector are looking at the Philippines (as a possible offshoring site)."

This emerging trend, he said, would provide a wider market for small and medium-sized call centers operating in the country.

Gov't plan to sell $1B in bonds OKd

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has approved the government's plan to sell $1 billion worth of sovereign bonds in the international capital market to plug a widening budget gap.

The government was not supposed to borrow an additional $1 billion since it had already raised $1.5 billion from offshore sources in January. However, recent estimates that the budget deficit would hit as high as P330 billion this year forced it to raise more funds. Earlier, the government expected a deficit of only P135.2 billion.

Economic managers allowed the government to post a higher budget deficit following assurances that the economy might grow much slower than earlier anticipated. The government was earlier expecting a gross domestic product growth of between 3.1 and 4.1 percent, but it eventually revised the forecast to a range of only 0.4 to 1.4 percent.

The government is weighing its options on how to do the $1 billion foreign borrowing. It may sell either BOPs to the international capital market or Samurai bonds.

Michelle V. Perez

Construction down in Q1, NSO says

By Roxanne W. Domingo

THE VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION PROjects in the first quarter of 2009 totaled P102.7 billion, a slight decline of 1.3 percent from P103.1 billion posted in the same period last year, said the National Statistics Office.

The construction industry was a major growth driver in 2008 when the local economy started feeling the impact of the global crisis.

However, the NSO noted in its latest report on private construction that there was an increase in units built.

Projects nationwide numbered 27,261 in the first quarter, growing by 19.7 percent from the 22,787 applications received during the same period of 2008.

In terms of value, residential building construction, amounting to P37.1 billion, was up by 30.1 percent from P5.4.4 billion during the same period of 2008.

More, but cheaper, housing units put up

With a total floor area of 2.3 million square meters, residential buildings chalk up an average cost of P7,059 a sq.m.

Single-type units made up the bulk of residential building construction with 15,938 approved permits or 61.3 percent of the total.

These units account for P1.2.4 billion covering a total floor area of 1.7 million sq.m., which means an average cost of P7,238 a sq.m.

Apartments made up the second biggest batch with 3,309 approved permits or 18.9 percent of all residential projects in the first quarter.

These buildings were valued at an estimated P2.5 billion with a total floor area of 339,800 sq.m. or an average cost of P7,181 a sq.m.

On the other hand, non-residential building constructions decreased to number to 4,108 or by 42.6 percent from 2,991 in the first quarter last year.

These represent a total value of P9.7 billion or a decrease of 27.3 percent from P13.3 billion as of March last year.

Chevron plans to drill new wells in Tiwi, Makban

By Amy R. Remo

TIWI, ALBAY—CHEVRON GEOTHERMAL Philippines Holdings Inc. plans to drill 10 to 12 new wells to sustain the operation of the 289-megawatt (MW) Tiwi and 458.5MW Makban geothermal power plants.

Antonio F. Yu, president and general manager of Chevron Geothermal, said in a briefing here that the plan to drill new wells, which may cost as much as $90 million, had been submitted to the Aboitiz group's AP Renewables Inc., the new owner of the geothermal power facilities.

He explained that the proposal formed part of the optimization plan for both geothermal plants, as the steam from current wells was expected to decline by 6 percent a year.

These proposed wells have the potential **to add as much as 120 MW to the installed** capacity of the two geothermal power plants, Yu added.

He said, however, that Chevron and AP Renewables were still in talks over the drilling **proposal, but he expressed confidence that** an agreement would be forged soon.

Should the proposal push through, Yu said Chevron planned to drill over the next three years at least three new wells within the Tiwi facility in Albay, and up to 12 wells in the Makban complex in Laguna and Batangas.

Under an existing agreement, Yu said Chevron would shoulder 45 percent of the cost, while the remaining 55 percent would be paid for by AP Renewables.

AP Renewables got control of the Tiwi-Makban geothermal facilities in an auction last year after posting the winning bid of P108.9 million.

MPIC aims to complete talks on Skyway within '09

By Doris C. Dumlao

INFRASTRUCTURE HOLDING firm Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) aims to complete negotiations on the planned increase in its stake in Metro Manila's elevated toll-road project, the Skyway, within this year.

"We're in talks to buy shares from other stockholders, principally the Indonesian shareholders, but it may not be a complete buyout. That's been identified sometime in any," MPIC chair Manuel Villaluz said in a recent interview.

"Nothing is firm. It's very tentative," he said.

It was earlier reported that MPIC was in talks with the Gotianun group of companies, the controlling stockholder of the company operating the Skyway, on the possibility of hiking MPIC's stake in Skyway to 30 percent from the existing 3 percent.

Pangilinan said MPIC was focused on Skyway as well as the connector road project that would link North and South Luzon Expressways.

MPIC subway unit Manila Metro Tollways Corp. (MMTC) is planning a P20-billion integrated rail and subway joint venture with state-owned Philippine Na-

MAINAID: V Pangilinan

tional Railways. They agreed to jointly conduct a pre-feasibility study for a facility that will connect the expressways with high-quality and elevated mass-rapid transit (MRT) line right-of-way in Metro Manila.

Pangilinan said the group had yet to obtain financing for the project, which aims to reduce travel time between the expressways to 15 minutes from the one hour or so via the Edsa or C-5 highway.

"We have to determine whether we are on the second or third level... The higher you go up, the more expensive it is so we'd like to have the second level," Pangilinan said.

Philweb posted 52% profit growth in H1

INTERNET GAMING PHILWEB Corp. reported a first-semester net profit of P272.6 million, 52 percent higher than a year ago and almost at par with the one net income posted for the whole of last year.

In a statement, the listed company said its core net income or that excluding non-recurring items for the second quarter of 2009 hit P122.8 million, up by 126 percent from year-ago level.

The company reported a one net income of P270.6 million for the whole of last year, mainly on its partnership with state-owned Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) on online gaming. Net profit for the first semester of last year amounted to P146.6 million, based on an audited filing with the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"Our growth spurt continues to accelerate as we open more of our Pagcor e-Games Cafes (PEGS)," PhilWeb president Dennis Fehlen said. "We just opened our 120th cafes. The 29 we opened over the first half of 2009 represent a faster opening rate than last year, when we opened 45 for the entire year."

To further accelerate growth, Fehlen said Pagcor would introduce a new e-Games logo that would distinguish all of its PEGS cafes from other Pagcor e-Games. "The new e-Games logo is already being installed in all our existing cafes and in the new ones that will be opened soon," Fehlen continued.

"Other marketing efforts for the Pagcor e-Games Cafes have been intensified, as much as possible, to integrate daily casinos who has been increasing steadily for the past 18 months," Fehlen said.

To our 3000 annual report, we wrote that the record daily casino win for all 2008 was P6.14 million, set on December 26, 2008. This record has been broken several times, in fact, just about every new week, with the latest record being a casino win of P9.8 million for June 26, 2009," he said.

June 2009 made the record as the best performing month in the history of PhilWeb.

RP banks...

From page B1

Also, the BSP required that the average capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of banks stood at above-minimum level.

CAR, a statistical tool that measures the health of the banking sector, is the proportion of capital in total risks to which banks are exposed.

The banking sector's CAR on a consolidated basis—meaning banks and their sister companies—stood at 15.48 percent as of end-December, better than the 15.40 percent recorded as of end-September.

The latest CAR, however, was down from 15.7 percent as of end-December 2007.

On a solo basis, CAR of the banking system availed at 14.74 percent, up from the previous quarter's 14.37 percent, and from 14.71 percent from end-December last year.

The BSP requires banks to maintain a CAR of at least 10 percent. International standards require a minimum CAR of only 8 percent.

"The CAR of the banking system continued to be healthy ... despite turbulence in the global financial markets," Buenaventura said.

The central bank chief said the banking sector's CAR improved because of efforts to raise capital, such as through issuance of debt instruments.

Market awaits...

From page B1

investment at the end of the week.

"For the week ahead, market players may take signal on areas ... specifically from the US market," BDI Securities said in its weekly commentary.

Among the key data due for release this week in the United States are the producer price index, retail sales, consumer price index and housing starts.

"Any convincing results coming from these indicators may push the market towards 2,300 to 2,360 level," BDI Trade said.

Maria Arlyn Stevino of AB Capital Securities said the central bank's recent reduction in reserves would hopefully pick up business activities and boost the domestic economy.

"The market wants to see some government actions and [believes] that the economy is showing a better course than its global counterparts," she said. "[This] week, company earnings from the United States will be streaming in. If results turn out a bit better, both the US and local markets may find an opportunity to move higher."

Based on technical indicators, Stevino said there may still seem for the index to move up in the positive territory.

"But with the lack of a strong driver, [this] week may be similar to the past week in terms of small moves within a eight-mega per day," she said. Doris C. Dumlao

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Loans extended by FCDUs down

Tightening bank credit standards, low demand

By Michelle R. Ramos

LOANS EXTENDED BY FOREIGN currency deposit units (FCDUs) of banks fell on a quarter-on-quarter basis as of March, as lenders tightened their credit standards and exercised caution in lending following the collapse of major financial giants in the United States late last year.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said outstanding loans extended by FCDUs stood at $5.1 billion as of end-March, down 5 percent from $5.4 billion as of end-December.

The BSP said short- and medium- to long-term loans extended by FCDUs declined during the period. Loans guaranteed by borrowers outpaced the amount of new loans released by FCDUs, the central bank said.

However, monetary officials said the drop in FCDU loans was not worrisome, adding that banks in general were still trading and no there was no credit crunch in the offing.

The central bank noted that even if FCDU loans dropped on a quarter-on-quarter basis, these still registered growth on a year-on-year basis.

The outstanding FCDU loans as of end-March was up by a 17 percent from only $4.4 billion in the same period last year.

The BSP said 60 percent of the latest FCDU loans figure was composed of medium- to long-term liabilities, which have maturities of more than one year. Only 40 percent was short-term, which has a maturity of one year or less.

The bulk, or 72 percent, of loans extended by FCDUs as of end-March went to residents. They are composed mostly of companies that import goods for raw materials, such as export-oriented firms, oil companies and manufacturers.

Non-residents, which accounted for 27 percent of the outstanding loans by FCDUs, were mainly financial institutions.

Monetary officials said the decline was not solely the doing of tighter supply but also of weaker demand. They explained that because many exporting firms, especially those engaged in electronics, saw drops in orders, they found it prudent to produce less, import less raw materials, and borrow less from banks.

Since last year, exports have been falling because of the unfolding of world market demand.

Demand for electronics, considered non-essential goods, was the weakest as consumers, especially from advanced economies, focused their spending on food and basic commodities.

The United States and Europe are two of the Philippines' biggest export markets. Exports to the United States accounts for about 17 percent of the total shipments during the period, while exports to Europe accounts for around 14 percent.

The plunge in export income was blamed for the Philippine economy's disappointing performance in the first quarter. The economy contracted in terms of gross domestic product, grew by only 0.4 percent from a year ago, the slowest pace in 10 years.

The government projects the economy to achieve its growth target for the year in a range of only 0.8 to 1.8 percent, from an earlier range of 3.1 to 4.1 percent.

RP hopes to be self-sufficient again in coffee in five to seven years.

DA, Nestlé aim to revive coffee export business

By Rico T. Dichoso

DAGUPAN CITY, DAGUPAN DEL. Norte—*Herald Philippines* Inc. and the Department of Agriculture (DA) have partnered to revive the country's status as a net coffee exporter.

"Our goal is to work together to encourage the farming of coffee so that the Philippines becomes self-sufficient in coffee in five to seven years and then after becomes a net exporter in coffee," Nestlé chair and CEO Nanche Standfabioni said after signing a memorandum of understanding with Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

Present domestic demand stands at 80,000 metric tons (MT) but production reaches only 30,000 MT and the rest is imported mainly from Vietnam.

The DA aims to see the 35,000 MT deficit produced locally by 2010. Aline Ilan, Yap said, the Philippines should be able to start exporting coffee, including value-added products.

To achieve these targets, Nestlé and the DA signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly facilitate technology transfers in coffee farming to local farmers.

Nestlé will also get assets from its global hub in France for further propagation in the Philippines.

The two sides likewise agreed to establish a coffee institute or center in the Philippines.

This will serve as the hub for technical and training support to various coffee stakeholders including farmers under the sponsorship of local and international coffee experts.

The agreement complements the DA's biotechnology joint with the Philippine Coffee Board and Brazil's Instituto Agronomico de Campinas (IAC) of the State of Sao Paulo.

The IAC is responsible for 95 percent of the coffee varieties in Brazil today.

The Philippine coffee industry was self-sufficient and even able to export to the United States, Middle East, Japan and Korea until 1990.

In 1999, however, coffee prices in the world market fell sharply due to overproduction in Vietnam. Coffee production in the Philippines began diminishing as the crop and the country has become a net coffee importer.

Last year, in an effort to encourage coffee production, the agriculture department promised to release P500 million to local coffee growers and farmer training programs to put there would be enough coffee trees to make the Philippine self-sufficient in the commodity by 2010.

Separately, Nestlé has been promoting sustainable coffee farming in the Philippines since 2006. The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Philippines (SAIP) was inspired by the SAI Europe initiative launched in 1996 by Nestlé Switzerland, S.A., Danone and Unilever.

The establishment of the Nestlé Satellite Buying Stations in strategic coffee farmers can sell directly to Nestlé their harvest at standard world prices, is among the SAIP programs.

Garments industry banks on US bill for survival

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOCAL GARMENTS INDUSTRY IS banking on the passage of a bill filed in the US Congress to stay afloat amid turbulent times and gain an edge over its competitors.

According to the Confederation of Garment Exporters of the Philippines, once the Save Our Industries Act (SOI) in US Congress sensing and becomes law, the industry stands to gain an additional $1.1 billion in revenue in the first year of implementation.

The implementation of the bill would likewise provide enough incentive for existing players to expand their operations and for at least 60 new companies to set up shop here, resulting in $480 million in additional investments and around 210,000 new jobs within four years.

"It's critical for this industry to get this kind of a bill passed. If the bill doesn't pass, then we maintain status quo. But down the road, we'll probably lose out to our competitors, especially those that already get preferential treatment," Cengap president Lawrence Ocbo Tiamzon said in a briefing Friday.

The bill, filed by Washington Rep. Jim McDermott, supports the country's inclusion in the 800 Program, which gives various benefits to US trading partners that produce garment out of US-made fabric or yarn.

Garment manufacturers from Mexico and Caribbean and Andean countries already enjoy preferential treatment, with benefits ranging from lower duties to quota-free and duty-free entry into the United States.

"This is the best hope for the Philippine garments industry as we reach toward to revitalization, targeting $3 billion in apparel exports and 800,000 jobs. We consider the passing of the SOI a tremendous achievement stemming from the government-industry collaboration to avoid sustaining our exports and losing jobs," said Cengap chair emeritus George Sy.

Cengap chair Henry Sy said garment production costs in the Philippines were either high or perceived as high by investors.

This was why the country has been losing market share to competitors and has been unable to tap certain segments of the garments market.

"The duty concession of 15-25 percent that the bill will bring will enable the country to be more competitive. We can go to the middle end of the market and get a bigger share of the overall market," he said. "The 15-25 percent duty savings will make the Philippines very competitive."

Holcim boosts sale of concrete

By Doris C. Dumlao

BAGUIO CITY – CEMENT MANUFACTURER Holcim Philippines expects to sell more concrete this year as it responds to the changing needs of construction companies.

In a briefing with local and visiting journalists who toured the company's cement plant in Bacnotan, La Union, Holcim senior vice president Fausto Delizardo said the company diversified into the production of concrete last year and it now has two plants producing concrete, one each in Taguig and Pampanga.

A third plant is being eyed in Quezon City.

Concrete is a combination of cement and other materials such as fly ash and slag cement, aggregates such as gravel, limestone, granite or sand, water and some chemical additives.

Apart from supplying cement to builders and contractors, Delizardo said there was a huge potential in selling ready-mixed concrete, which is completed by customers with more complex requirements.

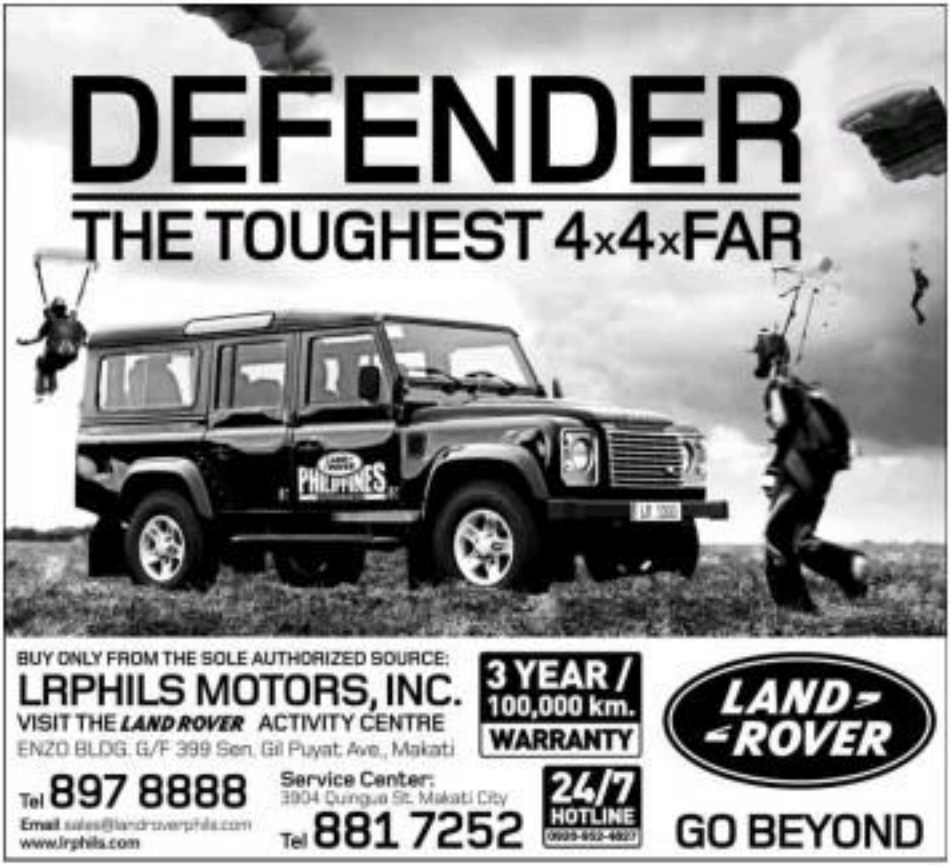
"Globally, it's a trend. In more advanced countries, producers of cement and concrete are integrated. In the Philippines, it's a separate business. We're the only cement company in the Philippines that has ventured into that," Delizardo said.

Concrete batching works are done in Holcim's plants or in mobile mixing trucks, all using a computerized system to ensure batch balance to exact recipe.

Holcim's batching plant in Taguig has a production capacity of 225 cubic meters an hour, while the one in Dasmariñas can produce 70 cubic meters of concrete an hour. To date, this business is still small compared to Holcim's cement business but the company plans to increase its concrete production to profit and revenue.

Demand for concrete is usually strongest during a boom in commercial construction, such as in building high-rise buildings, infrastructure and shopping malls, especially because it offers a more cost-effective way of constructing slabs, beams and floors compared to using pure steel.

Steel costs about P38 a kilo as against concrete, which costs only P1.8 a kilo, Delizardo said.



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NOKIA'S 5530 XpressMusic features an updated homescreen

There's less of the plastic, more of the glitz in 5530

By Charles E. Buhay

GOOD NEWS FOR THOSE who fancy Nokia's 5800 XpressMusic but find it a bit pricey: Come September, a more compact version of the music phone is set to arrive here with a price tag hovering just under P15,000.

Look wise, Nokia's 5530 XpressMusic isn't much different from its older cousin.

Up front, the 5530 is dominated by a high-resolution touchscreen (2.8-inch instead of a 3.2 because of a thinner profile). And similar to the 5800, this music phone could store up to 16Gb of files.

However, the 5530 will be shipped with a 8GB microSD card instead of an 8GB card.

Like the 5800, this music phone also sports a 3.2-megapixel autofocus camera (but the specs are not Carl Zeiss), 3D surround sound stereo speakers, a 3.5-mm stereo headphone socket as well as support for MP3, AAC, WMA, music and basic MPEG-4 video.

20 percent lower price

With almost similar features, you may be wondering how the 5530 is able to command a price 20-percent lower than the 5800?

The answer lies in the fact that the 5530 will only rely on 2.5G/EDGE and not on the much faster 3G/3.5 connectivity. This feature would have been a great complement when downloading music wirelessly.

However, if you're not too bothered by the phone's lack of 3G/3.5G support, you should find the 5530 a lot more fun to operate than the 5800.

The phone's slimmer profile makes it fit more comfortably in the pocket, and the 5530's metallic bezel is a welcome departure from the plasticky 5800.

Updated homescreen

Rather than a fixed four-person homescreen featured in the 5800, the Nokia updated 5530's homescreen with a carousel capable of scrolling up to 20 contacts (similar to the 5630).

This innovative "people carousel" could save thumbload images of up to 20 contacts so the user enjoys easy access to them, as well as their communications history, including e-mails, phone calls, photos or other social media updates.

Moreover, this homescreen also features a pop-up Media Bar to music, photos, videos, Internet and on-line sharing applications such as Ovi Share, and Flickr not just a touch away.

Considering that the 5530 is a music phone, Nokia says that one may listen to rich 3D surround sound for up to 27 hours on a single charge.

The unit can also create playlists, shuffle songs, mix the equalizer, use music as the ringtone, as well as assign a song to a contact.

Indeed, the 5530 is an ideal device for those who wish to quickly and easily access, share and mix a huge selection of music. 5530 XpressMusic is the music and entertainment experience. With a price tag that is estimated to be around P14,000 cheaper, expect this music phone to be on the shopping list of the young (wo)herding crowd.

'Transformer' lurks beneath

By Rina T. Obviedo

NOKIA N97

THE WAY USER TESTED N97 this piece didn't transform the way the 1970s did to the 'Transformer' movie, though it might as well have, considering all the conveniences it offers.

The mobile computer's large 3.5" touch display can be slid so as angle to reveal a full qwerty keyboard.

Users can switch between virtual touch input and keyboard typing. It made texting, blogging, chatting, and emailing easy since users could choose to use a typing method that best suits their fingers.

Files can be received and sent via Bluetooth, too, then edited and organized or passed via the web browser.

In a nod to social networking, the N97 provides an "sharing option" selection to favorite social networking sites and Internet destinations.

Among its many built-in goodies, the N97 has a facebook widget that can be programmed to connect to the Internet using WiFi networks even if the phone is in "offline" mode or is running its GM card.

In a WiFi zone such as the Armeria Center in Ortigas, for example, just walk around the driveway trail and then to the coffee shops across the street without having to reconnect.

Of course there's an Ovi store widget for downloading anything, from music to games and more widgets.

The mobile computer even packs in recording capability at a maximum of an hour at a time.

But then there's plenty of space (in the N97).

The N97 supports up to 48 GB of storage, including 32 gigabytes (GB) of on-board memory, expandable with a 16 GB microSD card for music, media and more.

The Nokia N97 also introduces the concept of "social location." With integrated A-GPS sensors and an electronic compass, the Nokia N97 mobile computer intuitively understands where it is.

The Nokia N97 is also suited for streaming flash videos or playing games for ongoing entertainment while waiting for your ride, bus order – or friends to drop by.

All this is complemented by excellent music capabilities, full support for the Nokia Music Store and stereo-rich playback time of up to 3.5 days.

The Nokia N97 also has a 5-Megapixel camera with high-quality Carl Zeiss optics, from-mounted camera for video calling, 16:9 and DVD quality video capture.

It's not perfect, though. The N97 has better battery performance compared to Nokia's earlier smart phones, yet all additional and simultaneous activity is encouraged could potentially cap its battery in a day.

Overall, it's not a bad deal for a P30,000 mobile computer that transforms to user's Internet life.

Color my hard drive

HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR hard drive? Blue? Green? Or, black?

Storage manufacturer Western Digital has put in place a "color" category system to distinguish suggested setups for its different hard drive products.

The new system aims to simplify for consumers the process of choosing the WD hard drive that suit their needs or "work styles," according to Tori Fogt, WD's senior manager.

For example, the WD Caviar Blue drives support desktop performance and reliability and are ideal for everyday users or business computing.

WD Scorpio Blue drives are mobile 2.5 inch models for notebooks and mobile storage.

WD Caviar Green drives offer the significant power saving and are ideal for environment-friendly PCs and external storage applications requiring lower power consumption.

WD Caviar Black drives, which can read data at 7200 rpms (revolution per minute), represent maximum desktop performance and are ideal for power computing applications such as multimedia, video, and photo editing, as well as extreme gaming computers.

WD Caviar Green

WD Scorpio Black drives are 2.5 inch drives, which also can read data at 7200 rpms, are suited to provide desktop-class performance for notebooks.

Included in the color category branding system is the new WD Caviar Green 2 terabyte hard drive, the first 2 TB hard drive produced in the world.

This new 3.5 inch platform is based on WD's industry leading 300 GB/platter technology with 32MB cache.

Sharing a "green" label color, the Caviar Green hard drive reduces power consumption of a PC by up to 40 percent. This is a very low thermal drive as it only consumes about 10 watts and less noisy as well when in operation.

"Saving power without sacrificing storage capacity is what customers and businesses want," said Fogt.

See the curious ask there, the suggested retail price for the biggest 2TB WD Green Caviar is P24,495. – Raquel P. Gomez

Globe launches Net Accelerator for faster, optimized networks

GLOBE BUSINESS RECENTLY rolled out a new Managed Network solution that enables enterprises to optimize the use of their bandwidth and run applications faster across their Wide Area Networks (WANs).

The Net Accelerator is a fully-managed WAN Optimization and Application Acceleration solution that addresses problems encountered on application performance, expensive connectivity, complex networks, slow and long-remote data backup and replication, and other network-related performance problems.

The Net Accelerator also enables business customers to derive savings as they can delay premature network upgrades or potentially consolidate their IT infrastructure to meet their present network demands.

Also, it can enable businesses to display mission-critical applications in areas where high quality low latency bandwidth is not available.

As a managed service, it relieves the customer from the hassle of evaluating, procuring, installing and managing a solution in your network ranges, then and latency at network Globe Business, with its experienced 24/7 technical support team, will manage the availability of the WAN Optimization Solution, making sure it is reliable and operating at optimal levels.

"We understand our customers and provide solutions that fit their unique needs," said Net Accelerator. Globe Business Services are another customized and supportive solution that brings the convenience to businesses with the new Net Accelerator.

'Eyes' to watch your every move

By Raquel P. Gomez

THOSE BIG ELEMENTS IN SECURITY should be eyes' watch out.

Wireless high definition video cameras may be recording their every moves, whether in a mall, out in a parking area, on an intersection – practically everywhere.

Leading security solutions firm Axis Communications, MIC Networks Corp. and Worldtel have recently announced the availability of wireless video solutions that can help make a whole city.

The "next generation" wireless video solutions are meant for governments, big businesses, and medium to small enterprises, whose needs for surveillance and security is big and far reaching, according to Bertil Ozn, president and CEO of Axis Communications.

The emergence of wireless video surveillance technology has the potential to help prevent crimes or mitigate its severity by accelerating the response of police and emergency agencies, Ozn said.

For example, a wireless video camera attached to a street lamp post or inside a train can be networked to a patrol car or the officers can instantly witness the actual crime taking place.

The wireless video surveillance solution offered by the three firms employs Worldtel's 4th generation wireless infrastructure mesh network, an infrastructure based on the MIMO (multiple input multiple output) technology.

Video from installed cameras, whose number can range from hundreds to thousands, travels across a wireless network, which is made up of groups of inexpensive small nodes, each capable of

HIGH definition video surveillance camera with wireless antenna

receiving and transmitting digital signals.

The nodes are placed on poles or other structures that line the streets.

When a police car comes within range of the nodes, the officer can access the video over an 802.11 receiver (Wi-Fi antenna) connected to a laptop or mobile device with video and wireless capability.

Ozn said the video surveillance solution can also be used for purposes other than security. It can also be used by malls to monitor people traffic.

One video camera, the Axis Q1755, even has a motion detection capability and can be programmed to speak when it senses a person's movements.

"This is ideal for stores as the camera can be programmed to say 'Thank you, come again,' once it senses a person coming in and out of a store, said Ozn. "The system can also help boost store productivity."

POLICE monitoring videos from the wireless cameras.

For those itching to sketch, a graphic tablet for drawing

HERE'S A MULTI-TASKING tablet with a beautiful flair.

Sporting a clean tablet finish with an orange outline, the Genius EasyPen i405 is both practical and trendy.

A graphic tablet especially made to make drawing and painting easy with a working area measuring 4"x5.5", the EasyPen i405 is convenient for writing, sketching and even signing documents.

EasyPen i405 works with both PC and Mac.

It features 1024 level pressure sensitivity with the pen tip

GENIUS EasyPen i405

moving precisely with your hand so you can control the thickness or soft your pressure.

The pen is erasable. There's a clip on the right side of the tablet where you can attach the pen when you're not using it.

EasyPen i405 has 20 programmable shortcut keys, which you can set, making it easier for you to access your Office or Internet functions.

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MONDAY, JULY 13, 2009 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B2

BUSINESS Monday

Business Futures Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Live-in Seminar for only P995?

RP aims for slice of global architecture pie

Philippines top destination for high-value services, experts say

By Arendie S. Tayao

WITH BETTER technology, collaboration and education, the Philippines could very well pave a promising future for the global architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry.

This was the general sentiment of international experts who spoke at the recent "Building from the Ground Up," a forum on different trends and advancements that the local AEC industry can capitalize on.

The day-long event held on June 29 at the Ayala Museum in Makati was spearheaded by Cirdia Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of multinational AEC company Cirdia Ltd.

Highly recommended

Speakers at the forum were: Scott Simpson, senior director of architecture and engineering Ron Eling Robbins, and co-author of "The NGC Architect: A new Twist in the Future of Design"; Emmanuel Samuel, AEC industry sales development director for Autodesk Asia Pacific; Mukund L Kumar, boutique Asia, Australia and Korea facilities and services director and senior executive of Aecom.com; and Egidio Zarrella, global partner in charge of IT advisory practice at KPMG, a global audit, tax and advisory service firm.

Zarrella's presentation provided an overview of how the Philippines is positioning itself in the global AEC field. "[With] the global financial crisis, there is a major shift from the west to Asia. The needs for architecture, construction are substantial in Asia," said Zarrella.

He added that the Philippines was one of the top five countries that his company, KPMG, recommend its clients to outsource and offshore to.

"Why the Philippines? Because there's a great literacy here, a great talent pool and [the people] are able to culturally fit with the West," said Zarrella.

Zarrella also stressed the importance of education.

In what he called the "global chess game"—wherein governments, private enterprises and universities all play a role in the AEC sector—he said that international companies would only go to countries with an educated workforce.

"Talent, and educated talent, is what the global industry needs," he said.

Labeling the AEC industry as "the most conservative industry" compared to others, Samuel discussed how productivity in the AEC sector is directly related to its use of technology.

He added that in a global study done by Autodesk and Stanford University, productivity in the AEC industry has been on a downtrend in the past 20-30 years.

"The AEC [industry] is probably the industry that produces the least amount of technology...and it's such an economic guardian, but we neglect that," he said.

Latest trends

Samuel also compared the AEC sector to "worldwide wrestling, [wherein] architects don't like engineers and engineers don't like architects," an issue which was addressed by Simpson in his talk about two "game changers" for AEC: integrated project delivery (IPD) and business information modeling (BIM).

"IPD, to a process change," said

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Life's a beach, golf course for business travelers

By Raquel P. Dumas

FOR MANY BUSINESS TRAVELERS, work and play should go together.

This is why Shangri-La at Boracay, which recently became a luxurious hotel and resort facility, has thus spruced up its image and amenities to entice these travelers to visit and stay a few days.

Improvements

Behind the improvements is Hong Kong and Manila-based Quantum Hotels and Resorts, which manages and runs hotels and resorts.

Quantum is positioning Shangri-La and Shanwater to cater to the growing business and leisure market.

Jerry Sumarde, Quantum Hotels and Resorts vice president for operations, said the hotel's clients are usually groups of employees from companies in Taiwan and Korea.

"Shangri-La and Shanwater is the only accommodation in Boracay that offers a golf course, beachfront setting, and private beaches. The place upgrades a lot to business travelers and their families," said Sumarde.

The 120 hectare property, which houses 97 a championship par 72 golf course (18 holes), offers Spanish inspired villas, private white beaches, spa facility, big swimming pools, fine dining restaurants, amphitheater and horseback riding.

FAIRWAYS and Shanwater in Boracay is going after business travelers, who want leisure activities to be part of their itinerary.

SUPERIOR Room at Villa Piazza

The Residences

Quantum Hotels and Resorts manages a cluster of exclusive residences branded under the name The Residences.

Each building carries names such as Mondigan, Isabel, Maria, Margarita and Bainbania, representing themes and interiors of the guest rooms.

All of these feature spacious interior with amenities like a kitchen and wide balconies that offer a view of the golf course and the island's world famous white sand beach.

Sumarde said Shangri-La and Shanwater is the first beach resort property under the company's wing.

Other hotels and residences managed and run by Quantum Hotels and Resorts are in Makati, Ortigas and Quezon City.

Fairways and Shanwater was developed by the New Coast Group in partnership with Filsyn.

It was initially offered as exclusive club membership and individual condominium ownership.

The residential condominium units reside within the big property group, separated from the new hotel buildings, which are located nearer the beach and the golf course.

New management

In 2008, Quantum Hotels and Resorts came in to manage the hotel, resort part of the property.

Fairways and Shanwater's transition from a hotel and resort to a welcome change for the owners of the property, according to Fernando.

Fernando said business has been good following the transformation.

Current occupancy enjoyed by hotel is at 60 percent even though it is considered off season in Boracay.

To make the property a hotel, Quantum Hotels and Resorts implemented major changes such as setting up the front desk, concierge, 24-hour shuttle services, marketing department and establishment of a welcome center in Caticlan to provide for the its guests.

"The company does not only do sales and marketing locally. We have international offices. We make sure that we do not only cater to the local clients but international clients as well. We have a sales and marketing team stationed in each property we manage, so we make sure that each property is supported," he said.

Quantum Hotels and Resorts plans to operate two more resorts in Boracay.

For the meantime, the company is busy highlighting the advantage Fairways and Shanwater has over other accommodations in Boracay, the pristine beach and the golf course.

GRAND Swimming Pool overlooking the private beach

Connecting the dots

MAPping THE FUTURE
Augusto L. de Leon

THERE IS A GREAT COMMUNICATION campaign that says, "Infrastructure is the root cause of our problems."

Very true indeed.

The number of Filipinos functioning without the basic amenities of jobs we have failed to create for them in our own country.

If we add the number of unemployed we have an idea of the "job deficit" that the jobfests organized by government would not solve.

While it is important to focus and have every single government official and people with capital to be conscious of how decisions they make encompass on joblessness, we do have a systemic problem that must be understood.

We remember the dotted lines! Taxation pulls out money from what can be used for consumers of products and services thereby reducing the purchases that limits production and employment.

If the taxes collected are unspecified, such that very little competency jobs are created, then the misallocation and misappropriation of tax money contribute to joblessness—the root of our problem.

Education. Our people are the basic resource that will resolve joblessness.

The more educated, the more trained, the more capable they will be to create and deliver value to the economy. The more people are able to contribute to the Gross National Product, the greater wealth and large pool for taxation exist, where properly used can create jobs.

Thus it is important that we are able to match the total government expenditure for education to determine the per capita cost of educating our youth each year.

A separate assessment has to be adopted to quantify the quality of education achieved. Quality of education and training determine job qualification that enhance joblessness.

Capital resources provide the structure that creates productive jobs. The pool of capital investment for job creation, on the other hand, is greatly influenced by the quality of governance and government policies. If we adopt the right policies and provide the environment, capital will flow in and we will have a larger capital resource by teh creation.

The pie of capital resource available falls in the hands of the government sector and the private sector. If the government takes a bigger slice of the pie, it has to take the greater responsibility of creating jobs. If it fails to do so, this reflects on the joblessness in the country.

Government's failure to do the correct portion can still be cured more efficiently to increase job creation if there were less obstacles and cost of doing business. More jobs can be created if there is greater efficiency in the realignment that enables products and services to be more internationally competitive.

We have to view our problem to abolish any and adopt suggested holistic solutions. Be this, we need not create a new model. We just have to look at Singapore.

Indeed, the article refines the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is principal consultant of De Leon Consulting. Feedback at augdeleon@yahoo.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit map.org.ph.)

Seaoil goes to Extreme to rev up sales

By Amy R. Remo

INDEPENDENT OIL PLAYER SEAOIL Philippines believes that oil companies usually trumpet three messages to sell their products: Performance, pricing and green marketing.

And while other firms can only be true to one or two of these messages, Seaoil president Francis Chua Yu said his company had found a way to incorporate all three.

Seaoil on Sept. 1 will launch its Extreme 97 octane gasoline, which provides motorists "extreme fuel performance" and value for money, while being environment-friendly at the same time.

"This will also revolutionize the standard of gasoline in the local petroleum industry," Yu added.

According to Yu, the Extreme 97-octane gasoline is the first of its kind in the country—a top-grade of the company's current 95-octane gasoline products.

The high octane gasoline allows engines to operate at maximum output as the higher octane increases horsepower and improves fuel combustion.

Other oil companies offer gasoline at 93, 95 and 98-octane.

A higher octane means more efficient burning of fuel and better engine performance.

"We are initially making it available in Metro Manila and we're willing it out nationwide in the coming months," Yu said. Seaoil has 45 stations in Metro Manila.

Yu said Seaoil has invested P10-million in the research and development of Extreme 97, which included extensive product testing over two years.

The fuel was also tested to perform under extreme conditions by actual racers who participated in the 2007 and 2008 Philippine Touring Car Championships.

He explained that Extreme 97 can be used on car models as old as 1990, assuming the spare parts of the vehicle are genuine.

"But definitely, 1997 models and above can run on Extreme 97," he added.

Despite having a higher octane content, the Extreme 97 costs almost the same as other premium 95-octane gasoline which also means that it is cheaper than the so-called "super premium" gasoline products offered in the market.

Based on Seaoil's own price monitoring two weeks ago, its Extreme 97 is priced at P59.85 a liter, lower by a few centavos than other premium gasoline.

As to diesel fuel, Extreme 97 has the latest technology additive, called hydrox modifier technology, to control the deposit formation on fuel injectors, carburetors, intake valves and combustion chambers.

It also has a 10 percent ethanol content, which functions as an engine booster.

"Conventional gasoline uses lead and other harmful additives as booster, which promote tail pipe emissions that are harmful to the environment," he added.

On top of providing consumers high performance and value for money, Yu stressed that the Extreme 97 fuel was environment-friendly.

Officials explained that the Extreme 97 could also be mixed with other gasoline and would have no adverse effect on the car, provided that the other gasoline is clean.

However, to take advantage of the high octane rating of Extreme 97, Yu recommended that it be used exclusively.

Yu said that with the new gasoline and the setting up of more retail stations, Seaoil expects to increase its share of the local market for petroleum products from the current 4 percent.

Seaoil plans to have 500 service stations by 2011, from the current 160 stations.

With its new product, Seaoil said it also expects to increase the volume of its gasoline sales by some 40 percent to 240 million liters this year.

Putting text messaging to good use in schools

From page B1-1

mance has risen as shown by higher average scores in science, teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil interaction got a boost, and, the classroom atmosphere has become more upbeat.

Tantoco says the teachers have been discussing for even more contents to show their enthusiasm to students.

Since 2003, more than a million public elementary school students and more than 1,700 teachers and school officials in about 256 schools all over the Philippines have benefited from the program. And Text2Teach is reaching more schools in the country, targeting an additional 100 schools nationwide by 2010.

Text2Teach went to 110 public elementary schools in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao through a grant from the United States Agency for International Development.

The team says some schools are even sharing their content with the rest of school youth who come to the Text2Teach classrooms after regular classes.

He says the challenge is to further expand the program to cover even more schools that want to experience the same benefits of Text2Teach.

It is possible given the commitments of the many organizations behind Text2Teach.

Ayala Foundation is the overall project leader, handles resource and partners mobilization and technical support for the project; Globe Telecom is the cellular capacity provider and powers the SMS network; Nokia Philippines provides the private server handling, which includes the provision of a 30-enabled device such as the Nokia 3595 4GB, equipped with the Nokia Education Delivery (NED) software that allows the teacher to select from the 367 education videos specifically created for the project; Siemens Inscotech credits the lesson plans and bundles the teacher training, while the Department of Education provided coordination with the public schools system.

Text2Teach's accomplishments did not go unnoticed.

Text2Teach was a finalist in the Touch-Tomorrow Challenge in Sweden—the world's leading ICT Prize for entrepreneurs and projects who use information and communications technology to improve living conditions and increase economic growth.

Text2Teach was also awarded the best in Support and Improvement of Education Category during the 2008 Asian CSR Awards.

But for Globe, the reward is knowing that Text2Teach has helped make mobile phone communication and SMS technology relevant in the upliftment of education in the Philippines.

RP aims for slice of global architecture pie

From page B1-1

friends. "You have architects, contractors and owners, but they are not bound together...by a common relationship. There's nothing that integrates the entire design community. DPD is going to change all that. You now have the means to have a single organization that binds the owners, architects...[under] one common. We have more brains at the table."

DPDC, on the other hand, is a technical change that allows architects, engineers, builders and owners to explore a project's key physical and functional characteristics digitally before it is built.

"The technology allows us to work in ways we've never worked before," said Smith.

Special attention was also given to the employees' workspaces by Ramos.

"With technology advancements in this borderless world, the workforce makeup has changed as well," he said. "We have to evolve around that."

Citing Workplace 2.0, a workplace standard started by Arconsave in 1992, Ramos listed the four Cs of an effective workspace: Efficiency, which focuses on ABC employees' functions; effectiveness, which looks at the presence of needed technology; engagement, which centers on how employees identify with their respective companies; and environment, which pays importance on what resources will be left for future generations.

Three pilot sites of Arconsave follow Workplace 2.0, said Ramos: Two are in Japan and London, and the third one will be opened in Houston by August.

Also at the forum was Dean John Joseph Fernandez, president of the Council of Deans and Heads of Architectural Schools of the Philippines, who talked about challenges in producing globally competitive design professionals, as well as career options for aspiring architects.

Winners of Cirilo Bautista Red Point Awards Thesis Competition, which awarded the best undergraduate architectural theses in the country for the school year 2008-2009, were also recognized at the forum, as well as the top junior architecture student of Mapua Institute of Technology, a benefactory of Cirilo's Lions to Lions Academic Excellence Program.

Cirilo says the forum is just the first in a series of discussions that is intends to hold to further improve the country's chances of cashing in on the outsourcing of architectural services, among others.

"The 'Building from the Ground Up' forum is a milestone not only for Cirilo Foundation but also for the Philippine ABC sector," said Cirilo Foundation president Catherine Ilelo. "We are one step closer to making the Philippines the preorder destination for ABC services and solutions."

Making money work hard using mutual funds

While there are no guarantees, growth potential is limitless

THE RECENT GLOBAL FINANcial crisis has taught investment-savvy Filipinos one valuable lesson: Find safer ways of saving up for the future.

And today, more and more Filipinos are beginning to find mutual funds as a viable alternative investment instrument and with reason.

The ability of mutual funds to provide returns higher than inflation and other traditional deposits makes it a wise investment option.

Still, while some have begun to appreciate the wealth of investing in mutual funds, others have yet to discover it.

Mutual funds defined

A mutual fund is an investment company that pools money from numerous investors and to purchase investment securities in the investment objectives and policies of the fund.

The investment is aimed at increasing the value of the fund and consequently, the value of the shares of its investors.

While there are no guarantees, its growth potential is limitless.

The concept of mutual fund in the Philippines is not all that new.

It first came to be in the early 1950s but its existence was short-lived due to some that hounded the industry then.

The absence of stringent regulations at that time led to such practices as the charging of exorbitant fees and sales loads, making it very difficult for some investors to break even.

So, when the stock market fell in the late 1960s, the mutual fund industry crumbled. Three of the four companies closed and the only one left eventually shifted to brokerage.

In response, the government have enacted the Investment Company Act (Republic Act No. 2629), which contained stringent laws that in turn hampered the revival of the industry.

It was only in 1969 when Trinity Shares registered its business and made mutual funds available to the Philippine market again.

With the success of Trinity Shares in terms of its sales growth and fund performances, two other fund companies soon followed suit.

During this time, however, the mutual fund industry was very heavily dependent on the equities market for lack of other instruments to invest in.

So when the Finn Quarter boom came and all the political instability led to a weak market drop of 28 percent in the 1970s, the mutual fund industry also fell.

But that was not the end of mutual funds in the Philippines.

Rebirth

The SEC in 1989 attempted to revive the industry by coming out with implementing rules and regulations of the Investment Company Act, meant to protect the interest of mutual fund investors. And so, mutual fund companies were on the rise again.

Today, with necessary controls and regulations in place, the mutual fund industry has regained investor confidence. There are now 41 mutual funds in the market with over P80 billion in assets under management as of April 2009.

Not just about money

While the returns of the funds are slowly picking up in the aftermath of the financial crisis, it is wise to note that "It's not always about the yield. When investing, one needs to look for three things, at least: Yield, safety and liquidity."

Diversification is another inherent advantage of investing in mutual funds.

The more instruments one has in his investment portfolio, the better protected are his investments.

In mutual funds, a rational investment can give the investor access to a wide range of investments precisely because his money is pooled with the money of others.

With a mere P10,000, one can enjoy the benefits of mutual funds.

Investing in mutual funds also allows investors to benefit from the expertise of professional fund managers who have the required capabilities, skills, knowledge, experience and commitment that allow them to decide when and what securities to buy and sell so as to yield the best possible returns to the fund and its shareholders.

Some mutual fund companies offer free non-load transferability feature. This is so because of the fact that investors' needs, preferences and investment objectives may change, so companies allow investors to shift their investments among certain funds up to four times a year, free of charge.

The world of mutual funds is indeed growing and opening up.

More and more investors are slowly realizing why mutual funds are viable investment option.

After all, who would not want the limitless growth potential? And while they say returns are proportionate to risk, it is clear that there are enough safeguards to protect the mutual fund industry.

(This financial literacy piece was prepared by Sun Life Financial Philippines in partnership with the Inquirer.)

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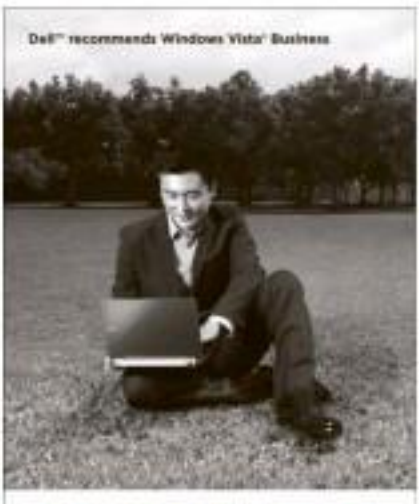

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BUSINESS Monday

Putting text messaging to good use in schools

Teaching goes high tech with Text2Teach

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

FILIPINOS ARE UNDISPUTEDLY the best in the world when it comes to text messaging.

So if Filipinos use their mobile phones's short messaging service or send greetings, stay in touch with their loved ones or share jokes, why not harness its power to improve the quality of public education?

A consortium of Philippine companies cooperated to form Text2Teach, a global education initiative aimed to narrow the educational divide between regions by improving the teaching of basic education in developing countries using high speed, wireless digital connection.

The text message-based program was deemed ideal for the Philippines not only because everybody knows how to use it, but also because the technology is cheap and can reach the farthest islands of the archipelago.

Text2Teach aims to help improve the quality of teaching in grades 5 and 6 classes in elementary school by providing multimedia packages designed to make science, math and English learning more exciting and meaningful among young learners.

The first phase of Text2Teach used the mobile phone, satellite technology and media matrix to deliver content to the classrooms. The creators see the mobile phone to relay video clips which are delivered via satellite, stored in the media matrix and viewed on TV.

For the second phase launched this year, the mobile phone is the storage device and is preloaded with the educational videos. All a teacher has to do is plug the phone to a TV and play the video lesson. New videos will be accessed by downloading them through the mobile phone using Globe's 3G technology. The videos are integrated with specially developed lesson plans that comply with the Basic Education Curriculum and designed for grades 5 and 6 students in public elementary schools.

The teachers then show these materials on videos capable of elementary school students who would not have had access to these multimedia presentations if not for Text2Teach.

PUPILS of Cotabato City's Sero Elementary School experience the wonders of technology brought about by the Text2Teach program.

GREG E. ROLLAND INQUIRER MINDANAO

The teachers were trained by experts from the Ateneo Innovation on how to integrate multimedia learning experience into their lesson plans.

There are 167 video modules in the electronic library and 480 lesson guides for teachers on topics that are generally discussed in the science, math, and English classes of Grade 5 and 6 students.

More interesting

Teacher's show topics in line with the curriculum defined by the Department of Education.

Jeff Tarajen, head of community relations and corporate social responsibility of Globe Telecom, says that with Text2Teach, learning about volcanoes, for instance, has never been more interesting.

The students agree.

Just six years since it was launched, classrooms among students attending Text2Teach classes has been reduced, student performance has increased and the number of teachers who have undergone training has reached 1,000.

Education divide

Text2Teach is the Philippine project under the dotSpot program, a global initiative that aims to narrow the educational divide between regions by improving the teaching of basic education in developing countries using high speed, wireless digital connection.

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Zen vision of pilgrimage in the Buddha's birthplace

Japanese architect Kenzo Tango's design is a 20th-century interpretation of Buddhist principles laid down 2½ millennia ago

THE AIRLINES ON the caravan to the Kathmandu airport were definitely local: Druk, Cosmic, Yeti, Sita...

And there there was Buddha Air, which, even on appropriating was the airliner that took us to the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, a World Heritage site in Lumbini in the flat, tree-growing landscape of southern Nepal. It was an anti-climax to the year-harvest summer season of our visit.

When I flew such that flight a year ago, my Nepalese friend Bal Mitra told me to take a window on the right side. A few minutes after takeoff, he told me to look out. To hill view were the snow-capped Himalayas.

On the same flight again a year later, my amusement remained intense; the sheer Buddha Air flight is the most memorable flight I have taken.

All mountains with snow-capped Himalayan peaks immediately dissolved upon disembarking at Gautama Buddha Airport. I was rudely accosted by the stifling 44° C heat of the flat Terai plain that stretched from southern Nepal across to southern India, whose border was only 5 kilometers away.

Author Peter Matthiessen writes in his book "Snow Leopard" that the combination of today looks as it did during the Buddha's time. That statement may be arguable, but the haunting feel of the landscape and its people definitely radiates a sense of continuity stretching back 2½ millennia.

Now, rickety buses often packed to the roof beg the narrow highways, which are crammed with slow-moving tractors pulling trailers, rickshaws, motorbikes, bicycles, oxen, women in saris or heavy black burqas, children and dogs.

Dirt roads branch off from the patched asphalt, leading to clusters of dirt-poor villages of mud-walled houses roofed with either thatch or baked clay tiles. Everything is built close to the ground.

Caked rice paddies, dried out by summer heat, surround the small villages where people gather under the shade of the few trees that manage to grow.

Sacred spot

There wasn't a breeze the day we arrived. Nothing, not even people, moved. In creating mid-day, everything was still, and only the occasional bursts of pelicans pierced the barren silence.

Beneath a sal tree (Shorea Robusta) in a Lumbini forest clearing, near where villagers now live is Siddhartha Gautama, Crown Prince of the royal Sakya family, who was to evolve into the Buddha during his lifetime.

He was born in 563BC, when Queen Maya Devi journeyed from Kapilavastu, the powerful Sakya capital where she had married the King, to the neighboring kingdom of Devadaha where she was born a princess and where, in keeping with tradition, she intended her son to be born. Unexpectedly she gave birth at a rest stop in the Lumbini forest.

The point where the queen halted before her delivery remains, now a brick-encased pool. A 6-meter high sandstone pillar erected by Emperor Ashoka commemorates his visit to the religious site to the third century BC. The inscription on the pillar is proof that here is, indeed, the birthplace of the Buddha.

A reputedly 14th-century sandstone carving depicting the birth is enshrined in the recently constructed Maya Devi Temple.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

BRICK-PAVED processional path narrows and ramps down to the causeway that crosses a circular body of water surrounding the Sacred Garden visible at the end of the path.

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WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

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WITH TIBETAN prayer flags overhead, a monk walks around the stone in the Sacred Garden where Siddhartha Gautama, later the Buddha, was born in 563 BC. In the background are extremely significant archaeological ruins of brick monasteries and stupas.

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Zen vision of pilgrimage in the Buddha's birthplace

From page 11

pic, named to honor the Buddha's mother, also worshipped by Hindus as a mother goddess incarnate.

The markers of the Buddha's birth, located close to each other in a special area called the Sacred Garden, are encircled by archaeological remains of monasteries and stupas dating since the second century BC, meaning that the holy site has been revered from the beginning.

Preserved brick outline walls and floor levels of unrailed buildings that already tell stories of religious life and rituals from centuries ago. Still unexcavated are vast areas of archaeological artifacts within the Sacred Garden; full archaeological documentation and research still remain to be done.

Master plan

In 1978, the eminent Japanese architect Kenzo Tange submitted the Lumbini Master Plan to a group of international and local authorities for implementation. Executors of the Master Plan has been minimal since.

To our advantage, really since it provides the opportunity to first-time the plan to meet modern needs impossible to foresee 30 years ago.

What needs absolutely no fine-tuning, however, is Tange's vision. As the Master Plan says, Tange demarcated a rectangular area oriented due north to south, three miles long and one mile wide, further subdividing the main rectangle into three smaller ones, equal squares measuring 1x1 miles (1.6 km x 1.6 km).

The first square on the southern side was designated for pilgrim services, including hotels, shops, library, museum, visitor information and parking. The middle square, the Monastic Zone, was designated for the erection of temples by different countries for their pilgrims. In the final, northernmost square, at the center of a circular body of water, stands the Sacred Garden.

To arrive at the Sacred Garden, Tange designed a spiritual processional that begins at a large plaza where pilgrims modify slight from vehicles to commence the walk of slightly over a mile to the Sacred Garden.

The brick-paved walk cuts through the Lumbini jungle in a perfectly straight, level line, shooting directly toward the Sacred Garden where Buddha was born. The point is visible in the distant horizon, the focus at the end of a long canal running along the center of the wide walkway.

Ritual walk

Once the pilgrim sets foot on the walk, his pilgrimage begins. The ritual of walking toward the Sacred Garden takes over. The trees planted at the center of the walk at uniform intervals begin a cadence marking the pilgrim's walk.

As he walks deeper into the Monastic Zone, his steps take on a rhythm that stills his mind more and more until the Sacred Flame appears, symbolizing the light of the enlightened soul, at the end of the walk.

After the flame, the walk contracts suddenly, squeezes the pilgrim between high brick walls, restricts his vision. Upon passing the connecting walls, it empty without warning into an expansive semicircular body of water. Release!

The brick pilgrim path turns into a causeway across the still water, ending at the Sacred Garden on the opposite shore.

The processional walk, fully designed by Tange brings the serious pilgrim into a state of calm, preparing him for his entry into the Sacred Garden, where he comes to experience the birthplace of the Lord Buddha.

The processional walk, the "warm-up" to the Sacred Garden experience and the "cool-down" walk in the return direction into the everyday provides the spiritual experience worthy of one of the holiest shrines in the world.

Its design is a 20th-century interpretation of the Buddha's principles laid down 2½ millennia ago, as seen through the 21st vision of the celebrated Japanese architect Kenzo Tange.

Despite numerous political situations, lack of funding and site-management issues, there, indeed, is continuity with the eyes in Lumbini, a major world pilgrimage site that strongly conveys that aura of spirit of place.

E-mail the author at pride.place@gmail.com

FROM underneath the sal tree, the pillar erected by King Ashoka in 249 BC and the rock where Queen Maya Devi bathed before delivering her son are in full view, although the recently constructed Maya Devi Temple totally dwarfs the spiritual and historical proximity of the Sacred Garden.

THE ENTIRE length of the Kenzo Tange–designed processional, which as the opening plaza, its straight lines sharply converging on the Sacred Garden in the distance, the birthplace of the Buddha and the whole purpose of the pilgrimage.

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"THE LOST Dragonfly," by Francis Cunnapan

'Lost Dragonfly': Tradition and translation between cultures and art forms

By Oscar V. Campomanes
Contributor

"THE PROCESS OF CULTURAL translation," says eminent anthropologist Talal Asad, "is inevitably enmeshed in conditions of power."

Cultural critic Rey Chow rhymes in that one form of power involved in the translation of anything—from culture through all its expressive forms and rites/objects—is locatable in the etymological link of translation with tradition.

"How," Chow asks, "is tradition to be transmitted, to be passed on, if not through translation?"

"Las Rimas," a group exhibition of 10 emergent artists (sans Oasis UP sans from Ateneo), which opened at Ayala Art Gallery Megamall on June 24 and is now nearly sold out, generally "wishes," according to its youthful curator Geronimo Crisostomo Jr., "for the interested viewer to appreciate heritage and culture in their many forms and times."

Crisostomo says the exhibition is designed to help "interpret a certain tradition, "along with its historical baggage," to a new generation.

Forgotten work

Serving as inspiration for the "Las Rimas" project is a little-known lyric poem, "Las Rimas," by the Filipino illustrator poet Flavio Zuñiga(1859-1900).

"Las Rimas" (the poem) is one part that signifies the whole of Cano's forgotten oeuvre, just as Cano himself is understood, in Crisostomo's context, as

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'Lost Dragonfly': Tradition and translation . . .

From page D1

one part that is made to stand for the whole of the Filipino Hispanic literary tradition.

The tragic burdens of this part of Philippine literary heritage, under the relentless onslaught of the 'broken' culture following American colonization, we know only so well, thanks to the late Nick Joaquin who wrote urbane essays probably the most elegant critiques of this syncretic cultural displacement and its most poignant effect, earlier.

Cano's work came to the attention of Crisóstomo while conducting independent research on Filipino Hispanisms and the Bonifacio legacy in short nationalistic flowering and extended reflexiveness during the American colonial period.

He stumbled upon an English-language translation of "Los Filmos" from the Spanish original by L.C. Stillhamer and reportedly commissioned by the Ayala Corporation Guru who first translated Poe (Spanish poetry in 1920's).

Thus began Crisóstomo's quest to think hard about translation and refuse to bound our lazy, or more cynically, as to etymological and powerful relationship to the incantation of tradition.

More specifically, given his Ma-Ibiong Pandan (Creative Writing) major, his art can unwind readers and his art practice at UP be excited to explore the possibility, with fellow Artists' Circle members at the UP College of Fine Arts and using Cano's poem as inspiration and premise, of a collaborative project in "textual and cultural translation."

What he wanted to happen was a dynamic and a project by which visual art (primarily media) be recruited in the service of a dramatic reenactment of his own original experience of rediscovering forgotten tradition (such as what Cano stood for) via the agency of translation/s, along with modifications on the emotive and critical dimensions of astonishing and art appreciation that such a process would entail.

As he put it in one of several exchange papers he drafted for intra-team collaborators: "How do we translate literature into painting? And, second, how do we translate literature in Spanish into paintings?"

"SUMPIL," by Liz Marzo

"FRAGRANT Memories," by Caroline Diggins

"LIBELULA Perdida," by Geronimo Crisostod Jr.

Multiform!

In actual output, Liz Rimas turned out to be, in Crisóstomo's consensus word from his rumored most, "multiform."

The project became much more than a translation from poem ("Las Filmas") into painting, as the completed and exhibited works now include—apart from conventional single- or mixed-media and experimental "paintings" by Crisóstomo himself and participating artists Francis Centeno, Patricia Bejar, Leo Manese, Glaizza Adriano, Paul Rocero and Caroline Diggins (the lone female contributor)—Ryan Tiston's haunting black-and-white photographs in glass encasements, glossy sculptures in raw marble by Kyle Chua (of treasure), and rough-edged moldings, in stained polyresin on upended wooden bases, by Marjorie Sison, present by hired factory member of UP Baguio's Diploma in Fine Arts Programs.

Pulsing here is framed by quote marks, given Crisóstomo's guidelines, which include the injunction, according to Caroline Diggins, that "the body of works should look somewhat unfinished and more sketchy."

Strikingly, painter Francis Centeno, who is fluent in Spanish, says his participation accorded well with his own aesthetic creed: "As an artist, I combine different media, and in my work I use contradictory grounds (tin sacks, metal sheet, a chair, a mirror) so I feel that it is necessary to deviate from the traditional oil paint on canvas, or in this case, acrylic one medium, like watercolor on paper."

As he recognized from the beginning, "the goal of the show was to capture the process—the raw sketch-like efforts, trial-and-error experiments, associated with the translation of words into images, Spanish text into visual."

Dark Bonds

Diggins's account of her decision to be much-literal with one contribution, only to be literary in a visual (to what French philosopher of art Jacques Rancière would call "mediatorial") way with the finished product, is quite telling.

Noting the preponderance of floral figures in the verbal imagery of Cano's poem, Diggins says that for the piece "Fragrant Memories" she "chose to use flowers, specifically sirelen... but instead of making them colorful or vivid," as would be encouragingly expected of a female artist, "embarked the colors so that the piece would not look too romantic."

She based the piece on stanza 2, "[Hilarious] are aromas enclosed in a poet's soul/in the dreaming soul/that fly after sweet dreams in the sky/that perfume the hair of a seductive virgin/with the fragrance of violets..."

But Diggins felt that while the speaker seemed "so in love with this woman that he felt and saw her presence in everything around him, even in his dreams," a darker side to all that romance emerged as the several recordings shown, since her decision to make the piece look darker.

Loneliness, agony

Similarly, Geronimo Crisostod Jr.'s piece "Lost Dragonfly," in focus on stanza 3, where the persona's soul now chases, in an orchard of roses, "a bewitching idea [an images bothering]" which is that of a "lost dragonfly (libélula perdida)" escaping into "virgin and misty horizons the verges of boundless darkness."

The contrast in poetry between verbal structure and "a sense of movement through mood-shifts and imagery," which this means exemplifies for him with its dynamic ease in sense, was what made him juxtapose "structured, straight and rigid lines/borders/edges" with the "wild meshes, nodes, and hexagonal lattice" in the strangically stuttered spaces of his compositions.

While the poem seems with "heavy, overwhelming splendor and positive imagery," Crisóstomo says he "still felt a sense of loneliness, agony and feeling lost—much like the image of a lost dragonfly in the orchard."

"NEVERS," by Kyle Chua

GERONIMO Crisostod Jr.

Young artists resurrect and interpret a poem by the forgotten Filipino poet in Spanish, Flavio Zaragoza Cano

"BTS Lunet Clouds," by Francis Bejar

Visual Arts

"SUB-SYNC" and "Par Life," by Alvin Gregorio

Gregorio at Drawing Room, Dimalanta at PWU Gallery

Alvin Gregorio presents "The Lineage of Ink," until July 25 at Drawing Room, Metrostar Bldg., EDSA, Wack-wack cor. Mauway Sts., Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. Gregorio's new series explores the cultural inheritance from family and various immediate cultures.

Gregorio is a US-based Filipino artist who grew up in the greater Los Angeles area. He received a Fulbright Fellowship and received his Masters of Fine Arts degree from Claremont Graduate University in 2008. Call 8919980 or 8917877.

Noted and multi-awarded artist Raoul S. Dimalanta, meanwhile, holds the one-man art exhibit "Dream Land" on July 16, at Philippine Women's University Gallery, Taft, Manila, with Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and former Senator Orly Mercado as guests of honor. The exhibit, which will run until July 31, is organized by the PWU Center for Culture, Arts, Music and Sports headed by Suzie Benitez.

Dimalanta is currently a member of the Art Association of the Philippines, Philippine Overseas Art Production Designers Guild of the Philippines, Pilipino Visual Artist Guild, the Scriptwriter's Guild of the Philippines and Likas Art Group.

Meirrbon at Ricco Renzo

"Nude," recent works by figurative and nature artist Norie Meirrbon, opens July 23 at Ricco Renzo Galleries. The exhibit features all female nudes composed of monochromatic colors. One of Meirrbon's paintings "introduces a new concept and style of painting," its collector extraordinaire Ricco Renzo explains, a combination of painting and animation drawing to make one nature in time and space." Call 8982540.

"Evil SHADOWS"

"LAVA Collected"

Oshima, De Guia, Raza and Clar photos at Silverlens

Silverlens Gallery (UP, YMC Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City) presents "Kamalayan," a collection of photographs by Kenneth de Guia, Wahi Oshima, Alden Raza and Julian Clar until July 25. The artists take a back-to-basic approach and utilize alternative photographic processes—Platinum Prints, Cyanotypes, Kallitypes, Handpulled Prints and Gum Bichromate Prints—that predates the first silver gelatin photographs by more than a century. Call 8168944 or 0905-3608515.

Seguirundo at Lirsa Tech

Photographer Chito Segurondo holds the photo exhibit "Recuerdos de Lipa," featuring the artist's and Lipa's favorite shuttering, until July 19 at Lirsa Polytechnic Center in Marawi City, Batangas. Call (043) 981 1100 or log on to www.lirsapolytechnic.com.

"HE AMOR"

"ALLA Primordiyal" 2

Habulan at Crucible

Renato Habulan presents "Bila Prima," which features a collection of small oil paintings in pastels/media, July 14-25 at Crucible Gallery, Old Megamall. The show features studio works and on-the-spot paintings. The second of three presidencies the 20 (5 canvas sized) celebrating this 20 years in art, "Bila Prima" reveals the artist's overarching aesthetic sensibility and serves as testament to his virtuosity.

2ND QUARTER REPORT CARD: PERFORMING ARTS

Fine musicals and urgent male voices

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

'Spelling Bee's' cast arrested once more to the Filipino's deep bench of talent in emoting, singing and dancing

WONDERFUL: (from left) Jenine Desiderio, Frenchie Dy, Jed Madela, Tess Tiglao, Jaboomatics in Pippin

THE MUSICAL COMEDY "The 23rd Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" by William Finn and Rachel Sheinkin, an Atlantis Production directed by Bobby Garcia (at the RCBC Plaza Theater), was a brilliant work with clever and witty dialogue.

The music was not memorable but it helped move the story along and reinforced cast ethe concerns of the play's connestants, with each having his/her big moment.

The cast of mostly new faces (in the spelling) performed wonderfully, surprising everyone, and adorning every story in the Filipino's (and one American) deep bench of talent in emoting, singing and dancing: Phoenix Rosales, Gychzelle Everly, Johann de la Fuente, Carla Guevara, Nikki Brown and Theo Tadiar.

At least one production is another Tony Award nominee, "Spring Awakening," starting Sept. 25.

Young ensemble

Almost in succession, at the same venue, came another Off-Broadway musical, "Songs for a New World" by Jason Robert Brown and directed by Robbie Guevara. Told mostly in the 1st-the suggestive, through songs and unfolding vignettes, the play dwells on failed relationships and shattered dreams, death, and hope evolving with the birth of a son.

Again, we had fine ensemble work by the young performers: Pella Rivera (look an eye on Nikki Curtis Guevara (such a show-stopping number as unabandoned self) Charly Chokchuan; Catou Bonvenu, Anna Sienna-cruz and Harold Cruz.

"Songs for a New World" was the maiden production of Ovation Theatrical.

The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra closed its 2008-09 season in the Cultural Center of the Philippines) with "The French Connection," featuring a fabulous repertoire consisting of Ibert, Ravel, Saint-Saens and Milhaud, under the baton of French conductor Michael Cousteau.

Hal Cin one of the evening was Filipino concert pianist Raul Sunico, who triumphed with Saint-Saens' Piano Concerto in No. 5.

The 2009-2010 PPO season resumes in September.

Absorbing

Multi-talented Rico Asis wears many hats: director, actor, songwriter-choreographer, journalist, critic, translator, teacher, physician.

Recently he came up with a full-length play, "The Male Muse" (New Voice Company at the RCBC Plaza Theater). It dealt with the violence by (and to) men, with the obsessive father being a disturbing leitmotif, leaving a trail of wailing wounded.

The play was often absorbing but at times unfocused, with the story (like "Songs for a New World") occasionally hard to follow. It was interesting, though, because of the message and also because the characters shifted easily from English to Filipino.

The burden of dramatizing (and selling) the situations fell upon four supremely actors: Tommy Abuel, Joel Trinidad, Jonjon Valdez (the outspoken' dreamboat) and Michael Williams.

Admittedly superb, but why did director, at times, push them the scope? Not enough time to perhaps memorize the Shakespeare lines?

Four Japanese classical musicians in July 12 concert

THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, Manila, and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, with the Embassy of Japan, present a highlight of the Philippines-Japan Friendship Month, the Classic Concerts: A Night of Japanese Elegance on July 14 (Tuesday) 7:30 p.m., at the CCP Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino (Little Theater), Cultural Center of the Philippines, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

The special concert features four of Japan's fine rising young classical musicians: Tsutomu Isonagi (piano), Takako Sugiwara (flute), Ayako Ishikawa (violin) and Shoi Kanzaki (koto).

Each have their own accredited careers, but they have joined together to form a new quartet as Japan's ambassadors of music, celebrating Philippines-Japan Friendship Month.

Joining the group, in the spirit of cultural exchange, is Filipino classical and jazz guitarist Jerich Rosos.

Their concert repertoire includes Western classics from composers such as Chopin (No. 2 in B flat major Lento Sostenuto from 2 Nocturnes op. 27) and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2; traditional Japanese pieces (Michio Miyagi "Haru no Umi") to more popular tunes from anime and cinema.

Classical music in Japan has gained significant popularity among the younger generation. This resurgence is also partly attributed to the continuing work of music producer Hiroyuki Tokushima who sought to make classical music accessible and attractive to a new audience.

KOTO "Koshi" Kazuo

The concert is a fitting highlight of the Philippines-Japan Friendship Month as it seeks to present Western classical, Japanese traditional and popular music by Japanese and Filipino artists.

Tsutomu Isonagi has won various local and international music competitions and has made orchestral and solo appearances throughout Germany, Poland, The United States, Finland, Czech Republic, Spain, Italy and Japan. He is currently an associate professor of piano at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music (Geidai).

Takako Sugiwara is an experienced and accomplished flutist who has studied under the tutelage of renowned international flute masters. She has performed together with The Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and the Tokyo Philharmonic as a soloist and a soloist and has released five albums since 2001.

Ayako Ishikawa started playing the violin at an early age and was the youngest to enter the prestigious Purcell School of Music in London. She has since studied in London, Tokyo and Sydney. Ishikawa received the Australian Musicians Academy Award in 2001 and was the first Performer of 2003 at Australia's Overall Instrumental Virtuoso Contest.

Shoi Kanzaki started playing the koto and shamisen at a young age, and joined various concerts for juvenile and open categories. In 2003, she was appointed as the Agency for Cultural Affairs Emerging Artist Local Trainee. In 2002, she won the Osaka Shichiseiko Art Encouragement Prize.

Shoi "Bandit" Kanai has been trained in classical guitar in the US, France and Spain, and has since then given and participated in numerous concerts and master classes. He was last featured as soloist for the Philippine Philharmonic concert season. He has faculty member of the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music.

For seat reservations and inquiries, call 832-1125 to 38 or e-mail email@jpf.org.ph. Reservations are required, as seating is limited.

MISA Kuranko

SUSUMU Aoyagi

AYAKO Ishikawa

TAKAKO Sugiwara

New Voice Company restages 'The Vagina Monologues' for one night only

AFTER ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY offering, "The Male Muse," the New Voice Company—in cooperation with Women in Rainbow Philippines (Winnphil) Association and Smart Link—returns to internationally acclaimed production, Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues," with a special one-night only performance on July 31, 7:30 p.m., at the Carlos P. Romulo Theater, RCBC Plaza, Makati City.

Dino Seiler's production of "TVM" has been repeatedly performed in Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong, and all over the country.

Directed by NVC associate artistic director Rita Ann with light design and technical direction by Martin Esmeo, the cutting now batch of women who will breathe life into Ensler's well-loved monologues include Jane Hamares ("The Good Body," "Into the Woods"), Lily Orr ("Cabaret," "Fabulous the Musical") and Mara Mitrovich ("Into the Woods," "Step'n'Out").

The show will raise funds for Winnphil's various projects that aim to involve women to assist affecting the mainstream industry. NVC artistic director is Monique Wilson and NVC executive producer is Rotonia Alunen.

For tickets, call 898 1173.

PETA brings back 'Noli at Fili (Dos Mil),' offers free tickets to bloggers

OPENING PETA'S 42ND THEATER season is "Noli at Fili Dekada 2000 (Dos Mil)," back by popular.

The play, which revamps and recomposes Rizal's classics, is written by noted academic and scholar Nic Tiongson. "It is Tiongson's keen understanding of Rizal's works that enables him to invest his work with imagination and creativity," one critic said.

"Noli at Fili Dekada 2000 (Dos Mil)" features an assortment of young and veteran actors: Lee Meneses, Robert Seña, Rosalind Ibarra, Shalaja Francia, Arch Valeri, Julia Rodriguez, Roddy Cayanan, Jojo Sentuis, Jeffrey Hernandez, Joel Saracho, Machiko Rubenecia, Joshua Chevarria, Upeng Calaycay-Fernandez, Ian Segarra, Shz Maala, Noemi Gonzales, Georgie de Joya, Raffy Tejada, Joel Molina, Jess Evardone, Ryan Alfonso and Paolo Rodriguez.

The production runs every Friday, Saturday and Sunday (11 a.m. and 5 p.m.) on July 17-Aug. 9 at the PETA Theater Center.

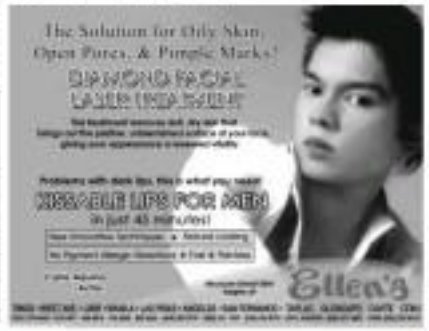
Also, PETA is inviting bloggers to watch its performances for free. Bloggers need to send their names, contact numbers and a link to their sample blog to petatapa@yahoo.com. PETA will choose the top 20 bloggers, who will be notified by e-mail.

The lucky bloggers chosen will get a chance to watch "Noli at Fili Dekada 2000 (Dos Mil)" for free, on the condition they write a review of the play to avail of the season pass.

Backstage passes, special house seats and an exclusive interview with the director and cast of PETA's productions are also up for grabs.

The season's lineup of plays includes, aside from "Noli at Fili," "Tanail at Isabel," a play about children's rights written by Rudy Sta. Ana and directed by Maribel Legarda (Aug. 28-Oct. 4), and "Pinoy," a musical comedy on Philippine timeless writings by award-winning Director Vince de Jesus together with Lito Magnaye and Aiji Heracela and directed by Phil. Noble (Feb. 5-March 7, 2010).

Deadline for applications is July 28. For inquiries, contact PETA marketing at 416-0851, 725-6244, 0917-8866226, petasupra@yahoo.com or www.petatheater.com.



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BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19). Today you're very concerned about domestic matters, family events or purchases and talking to others about them. You are eager for accomplishment by your fellowmen.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20). You can call upon to the cautious today. Your investments or earnings from your job are totally convincing. It's a good day for teaching, public speaking, selling and marketing.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20). This is a good day to start a business venture or purchase to your name's bank account. Legacy matters should be done. Be "on guard" that is related to your cash flow.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22). Your enthusiasm attracts others to you today, because of this, you're getting to know someone new today and can visit places. You'll be up for anything!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22). This is a wonderful day to be with your loved ones. You can gain a tremendous amount more because you're excited about whatever you're doing. Happiness you are experiencing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22). It's easy for you to dream big about your future today. Some following in a pursuit to suit the work—you're halfway there!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22). All exchanges with relatives, partners and others probably will go in your favor today. People are very impressed with your ideas because the sun is at the top of your most prosperous zone today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21). Any kind of study and discussions about travel and vacations are favored today! You're bent on how about something. Treat your families with gatherings, meetings and the like.

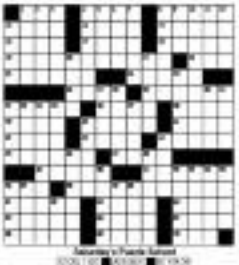
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21). You feel very independent today, but you're not afraid to attract your own best interests. Be sure to do anything that you can.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19). Conversations with partners and close friends are explosive and deeply adept! This is an excellent time to clarify or explain anything to someone.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18). Successful ideas unfolding allows today. You're so going for to do work, especially related work, that you think everyone else should be as excited about it as you are.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20). Your friendships are prominent and today. What you need to do today is to have fun. Group activities, social outings and playful activities with children.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

			3		8			
	9	8				5	2	
	2	4		7		8	3	
7			8		1			9
		2				4		
4			2		6			8
	4	5		6		7	9	
	6	7				3	1	
			9		7			

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	2	1	4	3	9	5	6	8
3	9	5	8	1	6	2	7	4
8	6	4	7	2	5	3	1	9
5	3	7	2	8	4	1	9	6
9	8	2	5	6	1	7	4	3
4	1	6	3	9	7	8	2	5
2	4	3	6	7	8	9	5	1
6	7	9	1	5	3	4	8	2
1	5	8	9	4	2	6	3	7

Ballet Philippines appoints new president, artistic director

THIS YEAR, THE COUNTRY'S PIONEER dance company Ballet Philippines welcomes a new president, Maegie Monsa-Flotildes, and artistic director, Paul Morales.

Monsa-Flotildes, who was the Miss Universe queen in 1973, has a Master of Business degree in Managing Rural Development from the University of London's Imperial College & School of Advisors and Asian Studies, in addition to her Business Administration degree from Maryknoll College where she graduated cum laude.

She has co-published two books "Mindanao, a Portrait" and "Mindanao on the Mend," and is involved in several other ventures by organizations including Habitat Philippines, WWF Philippines and the Southern Philippine Foundation for Arts, Culture and Ecology.

Morales, choreographer, theater director and independent filmmaker Paul Morales is a graduate of Theater Directing from the University of the Philippines, Diliman, and the CCP Theater School. With the support of Ballet Philippines, the CCP and the British Council, he became a scholar at the Laban Center in London where he was able to work with top European choreographers.

Morales has created dance works for diverse companies, and some of them have been featured at the British Arts Month as well as the French Spring in Manila. For Ballet Philippines, his works include the "Pavel Suite" from "Noche Buena," Camille Ordonio's "Seven Dreams" for "Sino-Filipino" and "SUBsolo Faire "Shows++."

The appointment of Monsa-Flotildes and Morales is reportedly auspicious for Ballet Philippines as it coincides with its 40th anniversary celebration. The renowned dance company is marking the occasion by stepping back to most popular and iconic works.

These include "Masterworks" on Aug. 14, 15 (3 p.m. and 8 p.m.) and Aug. 16 (3:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.), and "Tales of the Manor" on Oct. 23-24 (3 p.m. and 8 p.m.), and Oct. 25 (10 a.m. and 3 p.m.) at the CCP Main Theater.

Also included in the repertoire are "The Nutcracker" at the CCP Main Theater on Dec. 5, 6, 12, and 13 (10 a.m. and 3 p.m.), and Dec. 4-5, 12 (8 p.m. and 8 p.m.), and "Sino-Filipino" at the CCP Little Theater on March 5, 2010 (8 p.m.), March 6, 2010 (3 p.m. and 8 p.m.), and March 7, 2010 (10 a.m. and 3 p.m.).

This season's opener is accomplished choreographer Alden Luganzon's "Swimming the Dog Paddy," a rousing performance inspired by the campaign to rescue the Pasig River to its once pristine condition.

Ballet Philippines has also come up with a special blowout as a thank you for the support they've garnered for the past 40 years. On Aug. 15, during the 3 p.m. "Masterworks" show, all tickets will be priced at only P99.

Regular ticket prices for all other shows start at P300 and may be purchased at http://www.ticketworld.com.ph. For inquiries or details, call Carol Cubeta at 832-0851, 0922-813-3148, 0926-3824181 or e-mail carol.cubeta@balletphilippines.org.

MAGIE Monsa-Flotildes (below) Paul Morales

UP Press to launch 12 new books

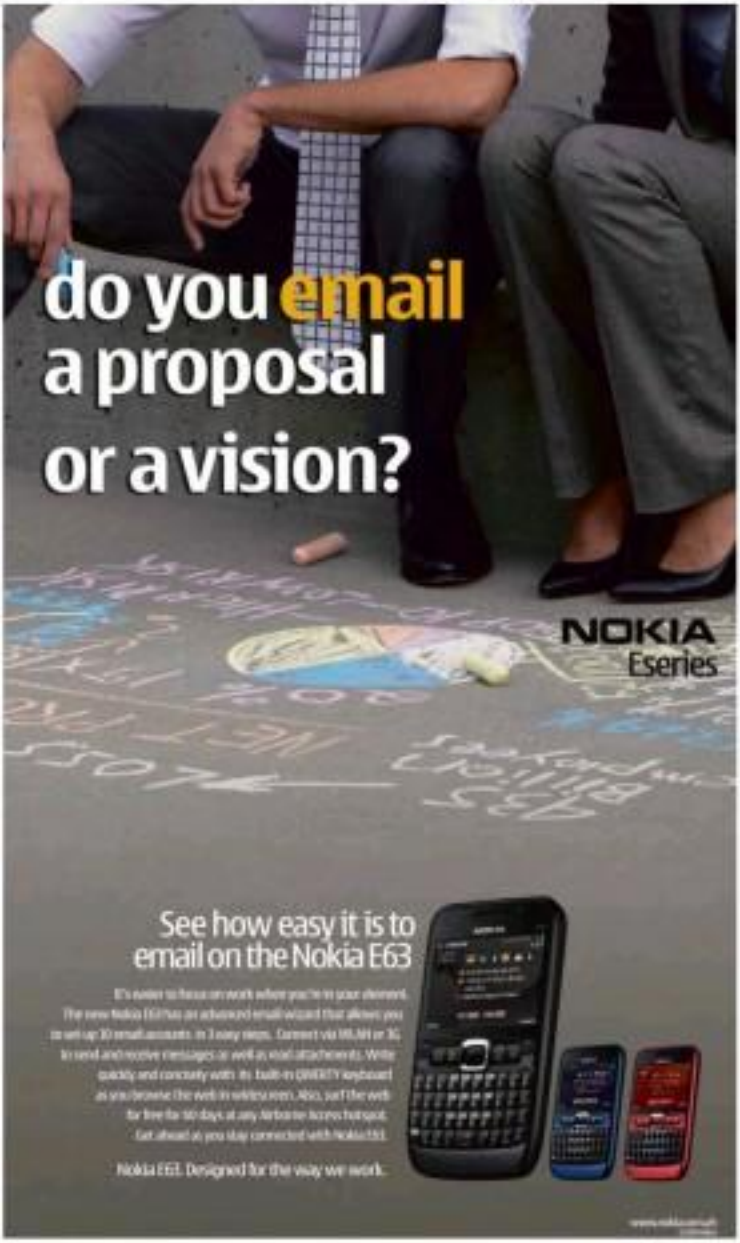
THE UP PRESS WILL LAUNCH 12 new titles in Pagbabasa 2009 on July 17 at the Bulwagang Rizal, UP Diliman.

Billed as "Unlimbrowsing Aklat ng Lahimbrowsing Manwestlat," the event will highlight books by accomplished authors, such as Joel Toledo's latest poetry collection "The Long Low Scarfe," William Pomeroy's "Rebelgan," and Gerard Lico's "Arkitekturang Filipino: A History of Architecture and Urbanism in the Philippines."

The other new books and their authors are "Philippine Annotated Penal" by Oscelia Chiong Sanchez, "Journey of a Retired Supreme Court Justice" by Abraham F. Sarmiento, "1900: The Way It Really Was" by Raul Rafael Ingles, "Lola Coquette" by Isabela Bunyan, "The Life and Works of Manuela Aduana" by Elena B. Aldaba, "Rebelgan" by William Pomeroy, "Globalization and Becoming-Nation: Subjectivity, Re-Gendered and Narrative in the Period of Global Capitalism" by Ilona Gonzaga, "Animal Stenching" by Ovidia Bondoc, "Pook at Pamumudyan Krisis ng Disistemyong Pamantas" by Ramon Guillermo, and "Bonsilak: Dalandayan ng Mangguguwa sa Kondukta ng Millenyong Kilusang Unyonismo (1998-1999)" by Apolonio Glua.

Buyers will enjoy a 20-percent discount on all the new titles at the launch. The authors will also be on hand to sign copies. Ruby Ballroom is on University ave. Diagdiag Ho., near the International Center and Gang Ilang Residence Hall. The launch will start at 3:30 p.m.

For more details, call 1892-61 loc 4922 or visit uppress.com.ph.



Ginang ALASKA

May "K" sa buhay.

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Kagalingan sa pag-aalaga ng pamilya.

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Ang maging ginang sa panahon ngayon ay di biro.

Dapat may "K" ka.

Kaya para sa ginang na may "K",
gatas na may "K" ang gamit nila, Alaska.

Wala pa rin tatalo sa alagang Alaska.

Editor Ramon D. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Robert Plant receives royal honor

LONDON—ROBERT PLANT RECEIVED A ROYAL HONOR FROM Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace on Friday meeting the former Led Zeppelin front man two months after his band came fleeting Page. But Plant joked he and Page would not be fighting over rank, even though Plant is now Commander of the British Empire in a higher honor than Page's Order of the British Empire. AP

Rowell Santiago sends Raymart, Claudine to pay respects to MJ /Dollywood/Page E4

Marie France's Physique Inch-Loss is a non-surgical and no-workout tummy toning treatment that slims down waistlines!

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-Ina Colmade

"I'm turning 46 but thanks to Marie France, I've kept my 25-inch waistline. Physique Inch-Loss definitely helps me maintain a flatter, slimmer waistline!"
- Carmi Martin

"I went from a 34-inch waist to 28-inch in just 2 months at Marie France. My secret? Physique Inch-Loss. Mommy or not, you'll definitely love it!"
- Bernadette Allyson

More about the amazing PHYSIQUE INCH-LOSS

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Q: HOW FAST CAN I SEE THE RESULTS?
A: In just 4 to 6 weeks, you get a firmer, flatter tummy area – no scars, bumps or injuries!

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SHANG CINEPLEX

1 HANNAH MONTANA 3D
11:10, 2:00, 4:50, 7:15, 9:35

2 ICE AGE 3
12:00, 3:00, 5:10, 7:30, 9:40

3 TRANSFORMERS 2 PG-13
9:30, 9:30

4 TRANSFORMERS 2 PG-13
12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00

HANNAH MONTANA 3D
2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00

Shangri-La Mall

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ICE AGE 3 - 3D	HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE - 3D	ICE AGE 3 - 3D
TRANSFORMERS REVENGE OF THE FALLEN - PG13	ICE AGE 3 - 3D	TRANSFORMERS REVENGE OF THE FALLEN - PG13

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THEATRE MALL

PROMENADE

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

CINEPLEX CINEMA FESTIVAL CINEMA

Walter Mart

SAGIP Baseball Team

Healing priest on 'Probe'

ON JUNE 15 ON "PROBE ENCORE!", Cherie Lucero interviews Fr. Joey Bilbe at the Kamay at Hesus in Lechon, Quezon on his life as a healing priest, the source of his power, the temptations he has failed to resist and the cross he now bears.

The show airs Wednesdays after "Banda Ka," with replays on Fridays at 5 a.m. and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. on the ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC).

CLICK!

It may also be viewed on www.pep.com.ph/tv/probe/encore.

Tondo league

The Anglo Baseball Team, organized by Edward Ballinga, is a group of poor kids from Tondo who are training seriously to become the country's first ever baseball champions from the slums.

Journalist Joy Icasc presents an inspiring documentary about the struggles and triumphs of this small but mighty "League of Hope" on tonight's "Lifeline" at midnight on DMZ-7.

ANTHONY Taberna

Street smarts

Anthony Taberna, Ed Aragones and seven drunks make their rounds on "Tatlo Mga Kwento ng Lansangan" tonight after "Tondilla" on ABS-CBN.

Taberna delves around the streets to find out why people are made to pay high parking fees. Aragones checks on the ambulances and rescue facilities in Metro Manila while Arnolfo does his scrap metals with one of retired actress Susan Roces.

To check what happens behind the scenes, log on to http://kilabot.multiply.com.

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MOVIEWORLD

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www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
4 THE HAUNTED
5 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
6 ICE AGE 3: (DIGITAL 3D)
7 PITIK BULAG / BENTE
8 Inglourious: DOSE
9 VILLA ESTRELLA
10 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

ERMITA

1 THE HAUNTED
2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
4 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
5 BENTE / PITIK BULAG
6 VILLA ESTRELLA
7 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

METRO EAST

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
4 THE HAUNTED
5 VILLA ESTRELLA
6 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
7 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
8 BENTE

NOVALICHES

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 VILLA ESTRELLA
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

PIONEER

1 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

STA. ROSA

1 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

LIPA

1 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE
2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS

DASMARINAS

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 IP MAN
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

IMUS

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

STARMILLS

1 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
2 VILLA ESTRELLA
3 THE COFFIN
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
6 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE

ANGELES

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

TACLOBAN

1 ICE AGE 3: Dawn of the Dinosaurs
2 DRAG ME TO HELL
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

BACOLOD

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 REVOLUTIONARY ROAD
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 FROM WITHIN
5 VILLA ESTRELLA
6 THE PERFUME

ILOILO

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAUR
2 THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 ECHELON CONSPIRACY
6 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

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Dingdong: I only sing in the shower

DINGDONG DANTE LAUGHED out loud when I teased him that he's bound to be the next Concert King, now that he has signed up with Universal Records.

"I'm not a singer," Ding said. "I only sing in the shower. The album will be a documentation of me in four different music videos by four directors... Louie Ignacio, Tata Medrano, Adrian Cabarrogang and Rico Gutierrez. There will be dance music and a love song."

Will Hanton Rivera be part of the video? "My leading ladies are all models but in principle, Monique will be there," whoever Ding is, or part Mexican for there, too.

MJ is now offering

Benedi Santiago told me that he requested his brother Raymart and wife Claudine Barretto to pay respects to Michael Jackson on his behalf by visiting MJ's award museum where he passed away. The couple took their kids Sabina and Santino with them and left flowers by the gate lined with MJ love offerings. The Gloved One will forever be the most loved son-of-his fans.

OMG!

What a delight to have a new daily radio show! Ogie Diaz and Mond Tayag for (replacing "Ohhkay-16," my show with JC). It's called "Soup, Talk and Listen" 10:30 p.m. with replays at 12 midnight and 11 noon the following day) on Cignal TV's Play Channel (Sundays).

Sister Mond, Ogie and I have strikingly opposite personalities, it's the 4th dimension that makes the show interesting. Watch us and go OMG! (Ogie, Mond, Dolly)

In the show, Ogie and I were teasing Mond's crush on our guest Mark Bautista. "Na link daw si pare sayo," said Mond.

"Especially when kinilig na ngiyaw na bullet siya. Ibig sabihin kilala ka ng ex-said-of BF Ko." I asked Mark: "Don't you plan to search Mond anyo?" He blushed and said: "Syempre naman, I'll wait na lang till she's free." Sus! where someone you're eyeing is totally willing but unavailable.

Sarah marathon

RAYMART Santiago and Claudine Barretto show off their Michael Jackson memorabilia. PHOTO COURTESY OF NOWELL SANTIAGO

In celebration of Sarah Geronimo's 21st birthday, Pinoy Box Office Otso's movie channel will air a special marathon every Saturday of July from 1:30-5:30 p.m. "Sarah in Motion" and "Lastbenchers Doing Home" on on July 18, and "Sarah R.Y.M." and "A Very Special Love," on July 25. It's Sarah mania!

Rockin' party

MYX Magazine launched its June-July 2009 issue with a rockin' party hosted by Ex Utane and Sisters in the MagVet High Street in Fort Bonifacio with games like Angkasbrid, Sponge Cola, Bilers and Mapanuksa. Grab a copy of MYX to learn more about these performers and the latest music events. Hik and catch your music tans.

PERSONAL: Thanks from the bottom of my grieving heart to my dear friends Glen Barcelona and Kennedy Que for the production behind Jackson memorabilia. An MJ fanatic like me cherishes everything Jackson.

E-mail me at inq.highlights@gmail.com

Dyords Javier in fundraiser

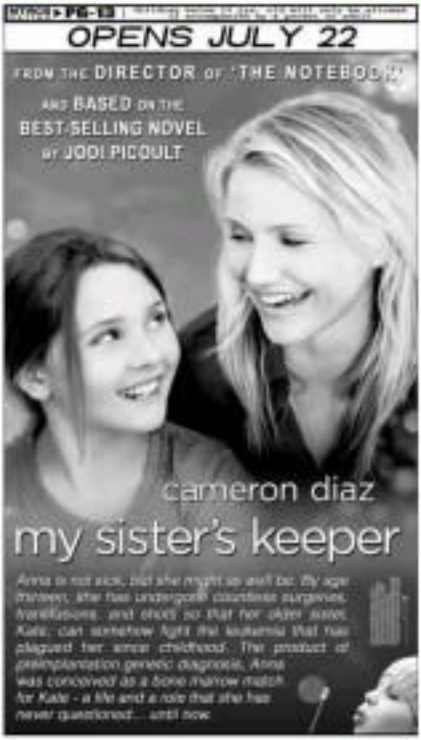
DYORDS JAVIER BLENDS MUSIC AND comedy in "Dyords Ko Ito"—a fundraising concert series on July 16, 23 and 30; Aug. 6, 13, 20 and 27; Sept. 3, 10 and 17 at Trenton, Greenhills Shopping Center. Performing with Dyords is Vic & Tippers duo Bayol. Guests include violinist Adna Lemos and balladeer Bevy Soviral. Recitalist is The Lutes School which uses the Montessori method to teach rapid and special needs children.

Dancing contest at Crobar

The search for the "Pole Dancing Queen" of Crobar Makati started on July 8 and continues every Wednesday at Crobar, corner J. Nakpil and Sta. Cruz Streets, Manila. Ladies aged 18-25 and who love dancing are qualified to join the contest. Auditions are held every Sunday 5-7 p.m. at Crobar. Call 7307768.

Dolly Wood

Dolly Anne Carvajal



odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO

5 MJ albums on RP charts

THE TOP SELLING MUSIC ALBUMS in the Philippines for the week June 22-28, based on Odyssey Music & Video store chain's sales reports:

Overall

1) "The Essential," Michael Jackson, Sony Music; 2) "King of Pop (Philippine Edition)," Michael Jackson, Sony Music; 3) "My Inspiration," Change, Star Records; 4) "Show Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 5) "Number Ones," Michael Jackson, Sony Music; 6) "Classic," Michael Jackson, MCA Music; 7) "Kilig Kilig," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 8) "Thriller," Michael Jackson, Sony Music; 9) "We Are I," Sexy Aquino & Ruby Jaines, Star Records; 10) "Hanash Montana Movie Soundtrack," Various Artists, MCA Music

OPM

1) "My Inspiration," Change, Star Records; 2) "Show Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 3) "Kilig Kilig," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 4) "We Are I," Kris Aquino & Ruby Jaines, Star Records; 5) "Salamat Sa Awiting Ito," Princess Velasco Blanco; 6) "Unchanging Love," Zsa Zsa Padilla, Polyfam Records; 7) "Groove," Billy Crawford, Universal Records; 8) "For You," Richard Poon, MCA Music; 9) "Charice," Charice Pempengco, Star Records; 10) "Contagious," Britt, Warner Music

US Top 10 singles

The best-selling recorded music in the United States as they appear in next week's issue of Billboard magazine:

1) "I Gotta Feeling," The Black Eyed Peas, Interscope; 2) "Boom Boom (Pow)," The Black Eyed Peas, Interscope; 3) "How I Roll," Drake, Bryant, Hip Hop Since 1978; 4) "Knock You Down," Keri Hilson feat. Kanye West & Ne-Yo, Interscope; 5) "Lovedrunk," Lady GaGa, Interscope; 6) "I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)," Pitbull, Ultra; 7) "You Belong," Sean Kingston, Epic; 8) "Forever Is Over," Jeremih, Def Jam; 9) "Now Divide," Linkin Park, Warner Bros; 10) "Shaking Up in Vegas," Katy Perry, Capitol

AP

LEARNING

Edited by Lizbeth Diño-Seguia and Florencio Cinco Jr.

WASHINGTON: SyCip, the man who gives to public education without any barriers, leads the "Tipanan" audience in applauding Synergeia's educational programs for Filipino children.

Christmas in June

By Milenia M. Guevara

HIS ARRIVAL WAS almost unnoticed. Joining the queue at the registration desk, he was asked by a Synergeia volunteer unconvincingly, "Your name, please?"

"Wash," he replied. The volunteer wrote the name on the ID card and then realized who he was talking to.

Washington SyCip then quickly took his seat, joined the singing of the National Anthem, and listened to a small group's plan to pursue the education programs of the Ned Foundation after the closure of its Manila office.

The presentation team have played his interest somehow. He invited the group to breakfast the following day.

At 7 a.m., as his guests had a breakfast of coffee, fried rice and scrambled eggs, he listened to how mayors and governors were working to make school children more literate.

Mayors Raul Daniza and Jun Bajar from Iloilo talked about children from fishing villages without electricity and decent classrooms.

Don Jesús de la Cruz of Makassar discussed how governors were organized to help teachers outside Cebu. Rodolfo Agbayani of Nueva Vizcaya was organizing kindergarten classes for children in upland communities. Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo was reinventing the local school board.

They were totally unprepared when Dr. Soti asked what help they expected from him. De la Cruz coyly replied, "We would be honored if you could join us."

On his birthday, Wash SyCip played Santa to public education

They nearly fell off their chairs when SyCip said he would extend assistance to their organizations, Synergeia, totalling P3.6 million in the next five years.

Annual gift

Following that breakfast in 2000, SyCip has been sending every year a check for P2 million to the Synergeia office without any further fuss: last year, he called me up to apologize for his "terrible mistake"—for forgot to send the check. The next morning, a check for P4 million was promptly delivered, representing his contributions for two years.

And to celebrate his birthday in 2008, he added P1 million to his annual contributions, with P5 million set aside for public school children in Naga City whose classrooms were destroyed by typhoon Reming.

And the Santa Claus of public schools continues his gift-giving even beyond the Christmas season. He also was prepared not by ideas but by his friends and their connections with which he is associated.

With electronic reading boxes given Brain Aspen, Colorado, SyCip talked Senator Richard Blum and his wife United States Sen. Diane Feinstein into developing children in Mindoro and Tawitaw. The couple started a reading program in Mindoro Oriental through the initiative of Gov. Chuie S. Moreno.

The presidents of the power company Shell, Andreas Rubli, became the sponsor of a reading program for public school children in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental.

A German "tell," Bernhard Krueger (grandson of Wolfhelm Tebelt), gave the gift of reading to children in Tagaig City.

Japanese Hirohichi Kawaguchi of the San Roque Corporation got involved in a project for the children in San Manuel and San Nicolas, Pangasinan, and Negros, Bulacan, Mr. Romeo, former Environment secretary, pledged his support for children in Montalban, Rizal.

Converting the clueless

At a gathering of Filipinos in New York, SyCip almost scolded a rich Filipino woman who talked about the Philippines' helplessness. He told her in just few snooty values her mouth was. "You will not be remembered for your diamonds and expensive watches. But you will be remembered if you help public school children complete elementary education."

The encounter scattered the woman that she visited public schools in Toledo and Bulacan and pledged her support to children in Northern Luzon.

SyCip personally chooses the people who help run Synergeia. "I am too old to be the chair," he said, when he asked Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, SJ, president of Ateneo de Manila University, to head the organization.

He gently pressured Solita Monsod of the University of the Philippines, Raines Bernardo of Phinma, and Fred Ayala of Liveit Industries to join the board.

SyCip wants Synergeia's

TURN TO PAGE A4

Kris Aquino on what she has learned as a mom

A COOL MOM. THAT'S HOW ACTRESS AND TV HOST Kris Aquino describes herself. The new endorser for Eight-O-Clock Instant Native powdered drink and iced tea mixes says she is not a strict mom when it comes to food.

"Let me say mom. She never had restrictions about what we could eat and what we couldn't."

Her mom, as every Filipino needs no introduction, is the highly regarded former President Corazon Aquino, for whom healing Manny have been held every day since news of her hospitalization and failing battle against colon cancer became media fodder.

Kris and her sisters have been taking turns keeping their mother company in her Makati Medical Center room. Kris says she has been spending as much time as she can at the hospital, leaving her mom's bedside only to do her television shows and to fulfill commitments like the recent media briefing to launch the new vitamin and nutrition drink Eight-O-Clock products.

According to Aquino, her husband is never the wonderful one when it comes to what the children eat. She admits he would usually say something inconvenient for himself like kids eating junk food, or taking something with so much sugar. Which is to be expected because her husband, after all, is James Yap, a professional basketball player who relies on a healthy and fit body to excel in his career.

"He is an athlete, so cautious person, and basically I'm a nerd, so together, I guess we're complete," says Aquino who is the mother (see book a eight times her mom's hospitalization), interestingly her current reading list is food-related: "A Bend Springs Culinary Mystery" ("with recipes in between chapters").

At age 2, her son Baby Aeonas is living up to his DNA. According to mom, he is very smart ("he has instinct, too"), but he also dribble and shoot a ball better than his dad could at the same age. "I can almost hear my mom saying, 'A little humility, please,'" chuckles the proud mother. Older son Josh, on the other hand, has taken to swimming. "He sees do laps," she adds.

As relaxed as her swimming style is, Kris Aquino admits to going to the extent of doing "super research on what vitamins and supplements

"Bimbi never shows a photo of James drinking his juice.

TURN TO PAGE A11

INQUIRER EDUCATION

Serial Reading

TO MARK International Literacy Day in September, we are coming out with a new story series for young readers.

Teachers: Sign up for free Inquirers copies for your Grade 3 or 4 class for the duration of the series.

E-mail or text us: YES.
SIGN ME UP <Your name, school, school address, landline, mobile number>.

E-mail to learning@inquirer.com.ph. Text to 0912-8182941 or 0918-3024061.

Playgrounds for the MIND

Tyler Aden Espinosa

Member Schools

UP holds system-wide conference

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE Philippines marked recently the beginning of its second century with a UP system-wide conference named "The Challenge of Being a National University: Looking toward UP's Second Century" at the Subic Holiday Villas in Olongapo City.

The conference brought together some of the university's most brilliant minds and representatives of different sectors: university officials, prominent fellows, faculty, research staff, non-academic staff, students and alumni, selected by UP's seven chancellors and the UP president. They were tasked to take the first steps in designing what might serve as a blueprint for the university's next century.

UP president Emerlinda R. Roman's keynote address, "After 100 Years, Where Is the University?" presented a quick summary of those contested lectures that formed on an assessment of UP. She invited participants to address the challenges and issues raised. To deserve the title of "National University" granted by its new charter, UP must now "take a long hard look at ourselves, and answer some tough questions," she said.

Keynote speaker professor Randolf David, of UP Diliman, sounded a similar note in his speech "The Burden of Being a National University". David said, "We can measure success in the direction of modernity – i.e., in the direction of greater functional differentiation – there is an urgent need for us to rethink and maybe reshape the space we occupy."

The conference was planned and organized by a program committee chaired by president Roman, with university professor emeritus Ernesto Domingo, university professor emeritus Faustino Sison Dalisay, David, dean Noel de Dios, professor Cynthia Bautista and vice president for academic affairs Natalia B Guerrero as members.

Among the conference participants were former UP presidents Jose Abueva and Francisco Nemenzo, faculty regent Judy Taguiwalo and staff regent Godofredo Cabrera, assistant secretary and dean of the UP Diliman College of Arts and Letters Virgilio Almario, national scientists Dr. Lourdes Cruz, Dr. Ricardo Lanzillotti and Dr. Teodolfo Tupaciz, officials of the UP System, the chancellors and other officials of the seven constituent systems, and most of the UP centers and fellows; university professor emeritus Dr. Cristina H. Rimel, Minerva David, professor Emmanuel de Dios, Dr. Maria Serena I. Diokno, university professor emeritus Dr. Ernesto G. Domingo, university professor emeritus Dr. Cecilia A. Florendo, professor Jose M. Magpantay Sorreno, university professor emeritus Dr. Ramon C. Sunico, and university professor emeritus Dr. Edgardo D. Gomez.

Participants broke up into four groups to discuss key issues raised by David and by the seven invited lecturers, with dean Marvic Leonen of the College of Law, dean Aileen Baviera of the Asian Center, Dr. Michael Tan of the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, and Dr. Rafael Bernardo of the College of Medicine serving as moderators.

During the plenary session the next day, individual reports by the session chairs and rapporteurs, and a synthesis of the proceedings by professor Cynthia Bautista of UP Diliman, were presented. President Roman then took over to offer what she called "A Framework for Facing the Future."

Taking off from the university's goals as articulated in its new charter, and the synthesis of conference discussions presented by Dr. Bautista, she identified four basic tasks: (1) raising the quality of public discourse on national issues; (2) preparing students for leadership responsibilities; (3) spreading UP's status as a research university with rigorous academics seamlessly and (4) redefining governance to create an enabling environment.

After the conference participants had approved these as the bases for the proposed blueprint for the future, president Roman announced that as soon as the conference proceedings were distributed, she expected the chancellors of UP's constituent universities to hold their own consultations and/or conferences in put together their respective and system plans addressing the four three tasks. The UP System will take care of Task 4.

New book on the 'greening' of the Philippines

IT IS IRONIC THAT WITH THE GROWING CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRON ment, there is very little being written and published in the Philippines. Dr. Angelina F Galang of the Environmental Science Institute in Miriam College has contributed a valuable addition to the small but significant collection of green books with "The Philippine Environment in the Social Age: Principles of Environmental Science in the Philippine Setting". This reference book offers a comprehensive and basic study of the 13 "spheres" that surround the human. It assists the reader in understanding the "hard" sciences and how they apply to environmental phenomena and issues. The book also directs the reader to the "soft" sciences and how they can be used to gain a fuller appreciation of the need for conservation and preservation. The book also presents relevant environmental issues and the different perspectives alleviated to each to assist the reader in forming his own opinions. This will surely help the reader in making informed choices regarding their lifestyle and life choices.

Vincentian's 'Train the Trainers' program

A TOTAL OF 30 PARTICIPANTS FROM 21 VINCENTIAN FAMILY BRANCHes and institutions in Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia and the Philippines joined recently the Vincentian leadership's "Train the Trainers" program. The 15 P. aimed to enhance leadership potentials as well as prepare leaders to surely in and adapt the training program to their own institutions or associations. The main facilitators were Dr. Paul Jolvanshy P.I. J. Patrick Murphy, DM, PhD, and Dr. Patricia Rockwell, RVM, D.Min. Fran Mapanao, team the leadership course in Chicago and Paris last year, including Indonesian provincial Fr. Dominic L. Sahaga, CM, who co-facilitated and contributed some topics. Fr. Raimundo Chiu, CM, a guest of the Philippine province, gave an inspirational message while Fr. Serafin Teraita, DM, APVC secretary, celebrated the closing liturgy. Plans are now in place to share and implement the course in the Asia-Ocean community in the incoming school year. The team leading the program will be made up of the four delegates who attended the training program: Cecil Mark Mirasol, PhD, IM, department chair; Paulano Ferrer, RVD director; Glen Dolores, faculty from the Basic Ed department; Joseph Dupas from the Campus Ministry Office. Quin director Pamela B. Manhilot will also join the team.

Heraldo Filipino reaps awards in CEGP-NSPC

HERALDO FILIPINO, DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY-DASMARIÑAS' (DLSU-D) official student publication, once again reaped awards in the recently concluded 69th College Editors' Guild of the Philippines (CEGP) National Student Press Convention (NSPC) held in Lucena City, Int's Manny Inte, Pasad, and its art and graphics folio, Alkasla, won first place in CEGP-NSPC's Literary Folio Category and Alternative Form Category, respectively, landing all other participating publications of various public and private colleges and universities nationwide. On the other hand, the student newspaper's editor-in-chief Rhodel Cayabyab, placed first in the Broadcast Category. CEGP-NSPC is the annual pre-Social educational festival of CEGP that aims to hone the talents of budding writers and artists from different tertiary student publications.

Google at STI College

WORLD RENOWNED GURU GOOGLE CONDUCTED RECENTLY A Google Ed Universities school tour to three campuses in the Philippines including STI College. Dan Dolima, a Filipino software engineer based in Google Japan conducted a seminar titled "Making Fun with Google Technologies. The Google App Engine from Start to Finish" STI College students and faculty members flocked to the STI Academic Center for a three hour talk discussing the fun building of web apps with Google's web application interface (API). The talk also served as a primer on Google's newest project - the Google Wave. Attendees of the seminar, who were fortunate to have first crack at Google's upcoming projects, freely asked questions and requested for demonstrations from Dolima. One of the top engineers of Google, Dolima was invited by Google country manager Arlene Agoo to conduct the seminar for free. Students of Google's partner schools in the Philippines: STI College, the Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines.

Calabarzon Communication Convention 2009

FIRST ASIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND HUMANITIES RECENTLY hosted the 2009 Calabarzon Communication Convention with the theme "Crossing the TV: Communication Education for a Fast Changing World". Film colleges and four high schools in the Calabarzon area were invited to a day of plenary sessions and interactive talks with known practitioners and communication professors from the media industry. In attendance were the following: First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities, Laguna University, Cavite State University, College de San Juan De Letran-Calamba, Lyceum of the Philippines-Laguna, Batangas City National High School, Batangas National High School, Cuenca Institute, Manila National High School-Lipa(pic), and The Rabbit Academy. Plenary sessions featured talks by Mowbinaya Raju Rutty Bacon, TV anchor Gilbert Remulla, filmmaker Raph Quijano and cinematographer Jen Lumbera. TV reporter Mare Umali, and Social Communications director for the Archdiocese of Lipa Fr. Melito Bello.

TIP Manila grad is 6th in CPA licensure exam

IS NOT MAKING BATTS ONE. A GRADUATE OF BACHELOR OF Science in Accountancy (BSA) of the Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP) Manila Class 2008, placed sixth in the Certified Public Accountant Licensure Examination given by the Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC) in May. Christine Joy Ramos Cabrera-Calimbas, graduate of Philippine National High School in SY 2003-2004. In 2004, he took and passed the President Diploma Quirino Scholarship examination in TIP and was a scholar of the school for four years. After winning first prize in the Accounting Quiz Bee (levels 1 and 2) of the Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants (JPIA TIP Manila) in 2005, he became the president of the JPIA TIP Manila Chapter in 2006-2007. In SY 2007-2008, he participated and won in various accounting quizzes and competitions sponsored by different schools in Metro Manila. Cabrera-Calimbas received a plaque of recognition as one of the Most Outstanding Graduating Students of TIP Manila in SY 2007-2008 during the TIP Recognition Day held in March 2008.

PWU-QC SPONSORS CONFERENCE

The Philippine Women's University-Quezon City campus recently sponsored a national conference on Special Education with the theme "Multicultural Realities of the Quezon City Special Child. Photo shows PWU board chair Dr. Teresita T. Ramos (second from left) who delivered the welcome remarks at the two-day conference that tackled autism, ADHD, Down Syndrome, mental retardation, dyslexia and similar health problems affecting children. To her left is keynote speaker Dr. Teresita Inciong of the Department of Health. Others in photo are Dr. Nida Roberto (extreme left), dean of the PWU-QC Graduate School, and conference chair and faculty Dr. Mercedes Arbola.

CEU dentistry graduates top board examination

DENTISTRY GRADUATES OF CENTRAL ESCUELA UNIVERSITY (CEU) PRODUCED some board topnotchers. Dr. Maybelle Dantes-Banaag and Dr. Jedrick Magcalas Diaz were placed 1st and 8th, respectively in the June Dentist Licensure Examination. The CEU Manila and CEU Makati campuses bagged a 100 percent passing rate for first-time examinees. CEU has consistently surpassed the national passing percentage. The School of Dentistry turns out the most number of dentists in the Philippines. Moreover, it is the only dental school awarded by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities - Commission on Accreditation Level III accreditation.

AdNU receives FAAP certification of Institutional Accreditation

LAST JUNE 22, THE BOARD OF THE Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) certified the Ateneo's earlier grant of Institutional Accreditation to the Ateneo de Naga University (AdNU). The FAAP certification is valid until November 2013.

AdNU is the first university in the country to achieve Institutional Accreditation, beating all the major universities for this distinction. This singular recognition comes on top of CHED's earlier conferment of autonomous status to the university and Ateneo's award of status for its key programs.

It was not only the quality of AdNU's program like arts and sciences, business and education that was recognized but also the quality of the entire educational institution.

The achievement was announced at the regular meeting of the Ateneo board of trustees on May 23. There was a special session as AdNU's Institutional Accreditation was recognized as a historic first. Fr. Joel Tabora, president, received the felicitations of the board members.

Institutional Accreditation is a very recent development in the voluntary accreditation movement. Ateneo has been granting program (e.g., education, arts and sciences, economics, etc.) accreditation since 1957. It only adopted Institutional Accreditation in 2006.

Having undergone multi-program and multi-level formal inclusions of its college programs in August 2008, AdNU successfully met each of the specific criteria to qualify for Institutional Accreditation.

The next step for AdNU is Level IV accreditation. So far, this status is enjoyed only by Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University (Manila).

EUREKA! *Queenie N. Lee-Chua*

Brain gain from overseas Filipinos

BRAIN DRAIN IS A LESS FOR society. Our country loses newly minted engineers and researchers to foreign jobs.

So, I was both relieved and delighted that the Philippine-American Academy of Science and Engineering (PAASE) encourages collaboration among Filipino scientists.

Composed of more than 200 scientists in the Philippines, the United States, and other countries, PAASE focuses on brain gain by encouraging overseas Filipinos to contribute to Philippine development.

When I joined PAASE, I discovered that this group walked the talk. Regular e-mail discussions revolved around climate change, education policy, nanotechnology, among others, resulting in the breadth of expertise of members.

From today till Wednesday, PAASE holds its 25th annual conference at the Ateneo de Manila University, with the theme "Linking Science and Engineering to Development."

Ernesto Tiptipan, Danilo Santos and Sapuwad Tan discuss alternative energy, while Carlos Bautista, Noelle Rivera, Samuel Pineda, Catalino Blancho, Terry Sarigumba and Florencio Payne talk about biofuels. Leonardo Gangcuangco, Agripina Lacanilao, Rachel Lagman and Jovenal Tobay discuss natural resources management, while Amorsolo Bagtasos, Augustine Deocaris and Marco Normido Mosquito discuss their research on environment. Josefina Cruzate, Antonia Palo-Loperaa and Debbie Marie Verceles zero in on climate change and disaster risk.

Health is tackled by Irene Villaflor, Clemencia Pacilla and Samuel Bernad. Baldomero Olivera, Gisela Concepcion and Belen Jose talk about drugs from natural resources, while Sabina Dayrit, Maria Cajucom and Janice Rita Manzanilla II focus on coconut research.

Arsenio Maria, Joseph Tan and Amelia Guevara discuss advances in science and engineering, while Ribsberta Bace, Silvando Mendoza and Baltazar Agada talk about computational and theoretical aspects. Gelli to Lebrilla, Zenaida Aguilar and Mirla Lorna de Leon tackle bioanalytical methods, while Erwin Enriquez, Romel Gomez and Arnold Galoy focus on nanotechnology.

Science Undersecretary Fortunato dela Peña, Ester Garcia and Fernando Aldaba discuss how to build human capital in science and technology, while Virtucio Garpia-Bautista, Ernesto Domia, Bienvenido Ferrer, Ian and I talk on science, math and engineering education.

Desiree Lo and Edwin Bautista discuss assessment of science risk in a Cagayan de Oro barangay and panel discussions on the Human Nuclear Plant, respectively. Paul Soares will talk about humanoglobin and vaccine bats. Elmer Ballon will present his research on coal wall climbing robots, and Vernon Medalle Benedit, the influenza virus.

Visit the PAASE website at www.paase.org and the conference site at http://www.aeneo.edu/system.php?LI=conf&pageid=1-12d5e8729f4A95.

Jesuit education

Also opening today in the Ateneo is the two-day Jesuit Basic Education Sesquicentennial Congress, in honor of the 150th anniversary of Jesuit education in the country.

Superior General Rev. Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, S.J., discusses the challenges in Jesuit education today while mass presider Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, S.J., focuses on the role of basic education in nation-building, with the help of panelists Bonia Ojeda, principal of Pagong Silang Elementary School; Mayor Nonie Lorenzo of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija; and Immediate Salient Jacob from USA.

Former Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus tackles administrative leadership, experience and educational value while Ebrahim Ismail, principal of an international school in Singapore, and Emily Abcarian-Abrera, McCann Global chair emeritus, talk about making students globally competitive.

What should Jesuit schools have taught their graduates—but did not? Charles Lanuza will moderate the discussion featuring alumni Dennis Jim, Domingo of Ateneo de Davao, Christopher John Tee of Xavier School, Kipalio Hotas of Xavier University High School, and Tan Yuson of Ateneo de Manila High School.

Solid education has several aspects, grouped by the congress into Friendship, Fire, and Frontiers. Under Friendship (collaboration and community building), Josephine Medina will talk about "Integrating authentic care personal(s) (personal care). Fr. Manuel Francisco, S.J., on designing meaningful community worship, Ateneo Alliss on making the most of parent-teacher conferences, and Carmela Dimalen on partnering with public schools.

Under the theme Fire (inspiration and passion), Raoul Inumerable on learning lessons from Jesuit patron St. Ignatius, Mrs. Tevia Santiago on the core Jesuit values, Dean Rocco panel on teaching, Cilia de Cordova Bernardo on classroom creativity, Rina Ona Ateneo-Banquet on social justice, and Dan Bernos on merge.

Under Frontiers (innovations in education), Jose Carmelo talks on understanding by design, Nilda Bonga on teaching cooperative learning, Teresa Nebrida-Ladrido and Friedrich Ferry on designing student-led roundtable discussions, Fr. Anthony Ishoyo on teaching with technology, and Leonardo Bautista, Jr., Miguel Dalisay, Michael delos Reyes, Robert Joseph Galvez on controlling bullying in schools.

Visit http://www.ateneo.edu/index.php?p=2734.

E-mail the author at lizbuls@yahoo.com.

Liberating the poor through education

By Linda B. Bolido

CAN EDUCATION liberate people from a life of poverty?

This question was posed by Standard Chartered Bank and the Association of Local Colleges and Universities (ALCU) to students in a science essay writing contest.

The international essay competition was in line with Standard Chartered's Here to Stay and Initiation Program, headed by its Philippines by chief legal officer Ferreros Rapsomi Tantoco.

It aimed to highlight the importance and value of education as a tool to help alleviate poverty, which the bank considered "one of the most exclusionary factors in society that block human beings from reaching their full potential."

More than 200 college students from all over the country turned in their theme "How Education Can Alleviate Poverty" for a chance to win P50,000 (first prize), P20,000 (second prize) and P20,000 (third prize).

Anthony Vic W. Cinco of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM) emerged first. Second was Julie Ann Tiernan of the Quarino Polytechnic College in Cabanatuan, Quirino and third was Jorge Bada Valenciano of Bago City College in Bago City, Negros Occidental.

Awarded distinction were given to the other finalists: Jaslyn Ramos Reana, Eric Tiberio, Raphael Moreno and Jennifer Anne Zaide.

Josefina Santa Maria, who represented the Department of Education during the awarding ceremonies, said education was the foundation of economic prosperity, individual liberty, social justice and well-being. She said education made people aware that they had a greater chance to succeed.

Privilege, not a right

Bro. Mel Tentorio, president of PLM and ALCU, in his welcome remarks, pointed out that poverty could sometimes make it impossible for people to empower themselves through education. "Out of four who enter college, only one will finish.... College had become a privilege rather than a right ... Education [had become] the greatest 'exclusive,'" he said.

Tentorio cited a goal of ALCU, an organization of educational institutions among of them local aid seek for supported by local governments, was to ensure free and low-cost education for the marginalized.

Eugene E. Ellis, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered, stressed that education could help but only up to a point. People needed ambition, will and sound grounding to make the most of education, he said.

His sentiments were echoed by Cinco in winning essay: "Education teaches us that only through hard work (could) we gain anything substantial." He said education gave people the moral grounding that left its members of importance.

To teachers or tutors (or their Colleges) who have been forgotten by society (and reminds us that if we achieve success we should try to help those in need). Give them the chance to stand on their own two feet, so that someday they will also help others," Cinco wrote.

Other members of ALCU are City College of Tagaytay, Tagaytay City; Dasmariñas Colleges, Dasmariñas City; Bagong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology, Davao del Norte; La Carlota City College, La Carlota City; Bislig City College, Mindanao City; Malolos City; Mariano Quirino Alarilla Polytechnic College, Bulacan; Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Muntinlupa, Muntinlupa City; Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Valenzuela, Valenzuela City; Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasig, Pasig City; Pamantasan ng Bayan ng San Mateo, Rizal; Pagsanjan Community College, Mauban Outreach, and University of Makati.

WINNER Cinco (right) is shown with (from left) PLM president Tentorio, Standard Chartered's Ellis and Daniel Hopkinson of the British Council.

Library renewal goes to Tiwi

OLIVEROS AND TIWI MUNICIPALITY HAVE launched the Synergia Library Renewal Partnership benefiting residents of Tiwi, Albay, who now have better access to educational materials. The new Tiwi Library, a collaboration among Chevron Geothermal Philippines, Inc. (CGPH), local government organizations Synergia and Bale Balani Foundation, and the Tiwi municipality is the pilot project of the Synergia Library Renewal Partnership.

The partnership aims to help uplift the reading standards of the elementary students in Tiwi and CGPH-Inc president for public government and public affairs Cyril de Leon. The major partnerships: Bale Balani Foundation vice president for programs and research Ching Jorge, and Synergia Foundation Board of Trustees governor Rafael Consunji. Standing (from left): Municipal councilors Clara Centeyano and Gabriel Cunanan and vice mayor Jojo Clemeno.

Children's book festival held July 29-Aug. 1

THE FOUR-DAY BUKLAT BUKLOT Children's Book Festival will be held July 29 to Aug. 1 at the Gloria Lahing Arts Level, Trillanes, Batangas City.

A variety of books and exciting events await kids at this two-day festival. A series of storytelling sessions will be held. Various hands-on activities have also been scheduled.

For details, see poster and other info. You may also request or pre-register for the events at the Trillanes concierge. The festival is organized by Filipinas the Bago Library, Trillanes, Philippine Board on Books for Young People, and National Book Development Board, in partnership with Jollibee and Bols.

UPCAT Made Easy!

Nowadays, qualifying for the most prestigious universities in the Philippines becomes easier. The competition for the top 10,000 slots or so is set at all time high. One major reason is the mushrooming of the review centers everywhere. Another is the holding of entrance exams in schools. So do you really think you've got the edge to pass the UPCAT?

Do not be complacent about your preparation. Everyone claims that he has prepared enough. So how can you beat the rest of the 70,000 examinees? Enroll in the most comprehensive UPCAT review center where made the UP. These secrets shall be revealed on July 18, 2009 at the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia Complex. The 37 Proven Tips Workshop to Pass the UPCAT the Sure Way! teaches every UPCAT aspirant how to master the UPCAT test reading, and how making the UPCAT Essay a breeze. Moreover, — LAST!! With the UPCAT experts themselves as speakers! headed by UP Professor and former member of the UP Testing Committee Professor Violy Quintana, UKMEA Philippines Member Engineer Perez, and UP Math Guru Prof. Leopoldo Laset, you are assured of learning all the UPCAT tricks and techniques that you've never heard even from the established review centers around. You shall also be having an inspiring awakening from a UP Class 2008 summa cum laude graduate. All these can only be experienced when you enroll in the only review UPCAT Mecca (pay the pun).

To reserve a seat, contact Jun Amuter at (02)985-5257 or 0922-873-8439 or visit www.upcatreview.com.

Christmas in June

From page F1

leadership to survive any individual pursuit.

Juan de Leandro, SyCip's fierce villages in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. A string typhoon in Manila could not stop him from meeting mayors in Maguindanao to discuss how to help the province's children.

He learned a simple formula for the mayors with pencil as the main cliff. Noting the superative mobile phone and signature Toilet of a mayor, he asked, "How can he be rich and poor?"

After dinner, we went to a mall where a bomb had exploded two months before. I remember a nervous mood, but SyCip kept his composure. He looked with wonder at Christmas decorations imported from China. I thought I saw a hint of sadness in his eyes, probably trying to figure out how the Philippines could compete against such low-cost labor.

He looked at a beach coat selling for P1.00. He was disappointed to find out it was P20-cheaper than the one he bought at Tiyange, a three-day Synergia bit. But after carefully inspecting the coat, he triumphantly declared, "It is smaller by ten feet!"

SyCip, the natural financier, demands value for every peso he spends!

Active participation

SyCip's biggest gift to Synergia is his presence. He actively participates in board meetings that are held in the MDF office. He never fails to attend education conferences. He is our best cheerleader, ready to give a "rah-rah" speech to encourage mayors, teachers and volunteers.

In Intramuros in February during the annual Tipuanin, he spoke to a huge audience from the middle to lower classes. It was a crowd markedly different from the collection of friendly who attended the formal dinner to celebrate his 80th birthday two days before.

But the Tipuano people were his people, too. Like a school boy he clapped his hands and gamely joined the Kalay-Sining Dance Group of the Philippine Normal University in one dance number.

SyCip says a person who cannot drink the water in a community has no right to tell the community what it needs and cannot do. SyCip has certainly earned that right. He will drink without hesitation the water that the poor will offer.

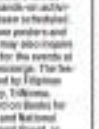
He leads by the heart and helpless not only by show, but also in spirit, boosting them with his presence and showing them diverse affection.

SyCip gives the gifts of hope and love in June and every day of the year.

The author, winner of last year's Gawad Ayala for Arts, is president and chief executive officer of the Synergia Foundation, a coalition of individuals, institutions and organizations working together to improve basic education. She can be reached at her website: www.synergia.ph.

Secrets to Pass the UPCAT – Revealed!

by Prof. Violy Quintana
(former member, UP Testing Committee)



This is the REAL DEAL! You will be taught how to score higher in the UPCAT – you will learn the secrets of successful UPCAT takers that various reviewers failed to reveal. Know how to get the correct answer from the four choices even if you have no idea about the UPCAT Question, and have the full confidence that the overly anxious competitors don't possess! — **The 37 Proven Tips Workshop to Pass the UPCAT the Sure Way!**

The biggest benefit that you'll get from this workshop is what matters most – you will pass the UPCAT the Sure Way! Through this workshop, UPCAT will become the easiest college entrance test you'll ever take! Both Prof. Quintana and the other UPCAT experts as your speakers, how can you fail?

37 TIPS to PASS the UPCAT the Sure Way!

Date: Saturday, July 18, 2009, 1:00 p.m.
Place: SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia
Ticket Price: Php 1,000 (until July 17), Php 1,500 (walk-in)

Special discount packages are available for schools!

For tickets, please contact:
(02)985-5257 / 0922-873-8439

www.upcatreview.com

MILK-DRINKING CAMPAIGN ALL SET FOR SY 2009-10

The annual nutrition education advocacy campaign Laki sa Gatas is gearing up to reach more Filipinos about proper nutrition this school year 2009-10.

The campaign to improve the nutritional, fun and exciting activities for children, mothers and caregivers, Eugene David, Mead Johnson Nutrition (MJN) business executive manager for dairy health and nutrition education, training P12,300.

It costs P23,600 a year or about P65 a day to send one child to Blues Amiga Academy.

Aside from local pledges, the organization also received donations from the participants' friends and relatives in the United States.

Mario Arriga Dance-a-thon was sponsored by 8 Dramaville, Globe Telecoms, Blumind Bonds and Beans, Bayu Barsang The Spa, Serengeto, Tropicana Twists, Nescafe, Maybelline, Enervon-C, Gardens Restaurant, Mamou, Chikoteli, Tortillas, Hawaiian and Gangra Bunsoy. Solar Sports will official media partner.

Visit http://marioamigafoundation.blogspot.com. Call MISIOS or e-mail iplengat@ablan.org.

Budget treats for students

SUN CELLULAR GIVES students the friendliest rates for new SIMs (subscriber identity modules).

The Sun Super Budget SIM helps them manage their texts and load allowance without sacrificing communication requirements in and out of school.

Sun Cellular offers a wide assortment of value-packed, 24/7 unlimited prepaid pockets that ensure customer connectivity and great savings. A 929 SIM is loaded with unlimited Sun-to-Sun texts and 18 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls, both valid for one day.

Sun Cellular's Call and Text Combo is available in P10 (valid for one day), P20 (valid for two days) and P30 (valid for three days) and allows Sun-to-Sun calls and texts, and texts to other networks.

With the P30 Call and Text Combo, subscribers can enjoy 60 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls, 120 Sun-to-Sun texts, and 60 texts to other networks, all valid for three days.

Call Sun Cellular hotline at 9950000 from a landline or 200 from a Sun mobile phone for more information. Visit www.suncellular.com.ph.

Dance-a-thon raises funds for nine scholars

MARIO AMIGA ACADEMY IN FIL-Tagalog, hosted recently the first Mario Amiga Dance-a-thon to raise funds for nine full scholarships to school year 2009-2010 for underprivileged children.

Sixty participants, divided into 12 teams, danced for five hours as friends, family and sponsors pledged various amounts.

Known dance groups like the Company of Stream Dancers (CODE), Funky Boots and The Philippine All-Stars performed for free.

Each participant got a "survival kit" containing biscuit by Collos, Pepperina Tattoos, Tortillas, Krispy Kreme doughnuts, among others.

Gift bags from Glowmet, Maybelline, Mamou and Hawaiian tours raffled off every hour.

The winning team of Isabel Saldana, Regina Victoria del Rosario, Patrick Santos, Cristina Fontboti and Paula Cortez, raised P13,000. They also won an overnight stay at Mimosa Hacienda, gift certificates from Gangra Bunsoy and The Spa, and bigas cupcakes from Kitchen Revolution.

The team of Patricia Ocampo won second, raising P12,300.

Mario Amiga Dance-a-thon was sponsored by 8 Dramaville, Globe Telecoms, Blumind Bonds and Beans, Bayu Barsang The Spa, Serengeto, Tropicana Twists, Nescafe, Maybelline, Enervon-C, Gardens Restaurant, Mamou, Chikoteli, Tortillas, Hawaiian and Gangra Bunsoy. Solar Sports will official media partner.

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Kris Aquino on...

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are good for the body." Among the information she leaked up pertained to urination.

"I wanted to know what exactly it did because it's the coaching that Right O'Clock has that other brands don't have," she says.

Solomon is one of the most temperature nonconvenience that the body needs because it is an antioxidant, meaning it prevents free radicals from damaging the body's cells. It detoxifies harmful metals present in the body, such as mercury. Tumor necrosis factor and natural sources of stimulants are garlic, fish, red meat, yogurt and nuts.

Making healthy tasty

In addition to solomon, Right O'Clock's other healthful ingredients include vitamins A, B6, C and E. Both the lemon and apple iced tea have these ingredients. Among the powdered drink variants, the orange, mango, pineapple and orange-mango have been "announced loud," Other flavors are pomelo-ea, lemonade, dalandan and pomelo.

Like all mothers, Aquino observes it a hard to keep children healthy and protected from diseases because they often do not like to eat what is good for them. It only makes sense then to include the ingredients they help strengthen the body's immune system to join and iced tea because these beverages are hassle-down favorites of children.

"My kids like Right O'Clock. They drink it forever and ever," Aquino explains. "Josh makes a big deal when it's raspberries when I tell him, 'Kuya, share with Baby James,' he gives his brother one sippy cup and the rest is his."

She herself drinks a lot of juice, she says. Since her mom's cancer diagnosis, she has been taking fresh green juice for breakfast, and juice from a mix of fresh green veggies at lunch but, she adds, she takes Right O'Clock quite frequently the rest of the day.

"It's my fave. My favorite is the Orange-Mango," she says. "I'm really a juice drinker. I like citrus. My body looks for it."

She also likes the iced tea, and is pleasantly surprised when she reads from the packet that lemons are only 14 calories per serving of the Right O'Clock apple-flavored iced green tea.

Aquino recalls living with her grandmother when she came home to the Philippines from the United States when her dad, the late Benigno Aquino, was exiled with the rest of the family in the later years of Marcos' martial rule. "Their juice was Right O'Clock," she remembers. "So it's a brand reserved by our family. I also like the fact that it's a Pinoy brand, made for the Pinoy taste."

Here's to Kris Aquino 4ps. Pure half of a 355-g packet Right O'Clock powdered iced tea mix into a 300-ml bottle of water, shake it and it's ready to drink.

ACTRESS Kris Aquino, with J.Bk. Reyes, public affairs director of Coca-Cola, at the Right O'Clock Iced Tea Homecoming launch

Ateneo CCE Launches Diploma in Digital Marketing - Ascents to New Learning Platform

The digital revolution opened the gate where it gave the consumer the ability to access unlimited quantity and quality of information. Technology altered the customs and amounts of options to pull a few clicks, sending out transactions worldwide. The market rapidly shifted and the consumers was just getting started.

As owners and makers of continuing education in the country, the Ateneo Center for Continuing Education (CCE) together with Blue Blade Technologies, Inc., and the International Mobile Marketing Association of the Philippines (IMMAP), signed a tripartite agreement to jointly offer the Diploma in Digital Marketing. This program aims to enhance the participants skills with strategic marketing knowledge and advancement concepts of digital marketing thus providing competitive advantage.

"The Diploma in Digital Marketing consists of fundamental topics such as: Web Development, Web and Email Advertising, Social Networking, Social Media, Blog Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, Mobile Advertising and Examples of Trends in Digital Marketing. In order to obtain a competitive edge, the program has integrated strategic topics such as: Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning, Ethics and Legal Issues," said Integrated Marketing Communications.

The Diploma in Digital Marketing Program will start on September 25, 2009 featuring a hybrid learning platform. Courses are tailored to start with half-day face-to-face sessions then shift to online discussions. Subject matter experts are highly visible in this mixed-learning platform with the goal of transforming the service marketer into a digital marketing specialist. Three specialists will become the harbingers of change in their respective organizations, leading their marketing campaigns to new heights.

Starting July 30, 2009, CCE, Blue Blade, and IMMAP will conduct a one-day introductions courses aptly titled Digital Marketing Made Easy. This course will provide a snapshot of the Diploma in Digital Marketing, allowing a bird's eye view of the program. It will explain the reality of this era wherein consumer's purchasing power and easy access to the Never Ending Web is the driving force behind market. How companies compete to survive.

Learn the digital revolution! Join the Diploma in Digital Marketing and Digital Marketing Made Easy by visiting www.ace.ateneo.edu and simply register online. Inquiries and registration can also be sent through email at ace-admit@mgs.admin.ateneo.edu or call (632) 426 6000.

Photo shown (L-R): Ms. Maribeth Calonia, Sales Head - Ateneo CCE; Ms. Arlene Amarante, Education Committee Head, IMMAP; Mr. Glenn San Luis, Executive Director - Ateneo CCE; Mr. Arthur Policarpio, President - IMMAP; Ms. Rina Reyes - Chua, President, Blue Blade Technologies and Ms. Cori Cruz, Program Manager, Blue Blade Technologies

Culinary school now accepting applicants

FIRST GOURMET ACADEMY IS NOW accepting applicants for its diploma and short enrollment courses.

The Diploma in Commercial Cooking and Culinary Arts is a six-month intensive course for aspiring chefs. It covers hard safety and sanitation, basic culinary skills and food science, baking and pastry, garde manger and international cuisine. Students undergo a three-month internship.

The Diploma in Commercial Cooking, Culinary Arts and Entrepreneurship trains future chef-entrepreneurs. It covers basic restaurant design, wine appreciation, bartending, service styles and kitchen management.

Classes for both courses begin on Aug. 24.

In the four-session European Cuisine Certificate program, Swedish chef Mats Loo will teach various European cooking methods. Classes will be held on July 14-Aug. 4.

The four-session course on Asian Cuisine will be conducted on Aug. 11-Sept. 1.

Founded in 2008, First Gourmet Academy aims to develop students' culinary competency and professionalism so they can qualify as chefs in any part of the world.

First Gourmet Academy is in Capitol Commercial Capitol Hills Drive, Old Balara, Quezon City (tels. 951/6655 and 951/1847; fax 951/8087).

E-mail: info@firstgourmetacademy.com. Visit www.firstgourmetacademy.com.

AT THE HANDOVER were (from left) Debbie Go of SM Prime Holdings, Linda Angeles and Debbie Ty of SM Foundation, principal Portacasa Sagayno of Mintal Comprehensive High School, city councilor Myrna Dulnuan-Doria, city assistant schools division superintendent Ms. Amanita P. Diaz, and principal Rosel Alvarez of Tugbok National High School.

Davao school gets blue building

SM PRIME HOLDINGS, THROUGH SM Foundation Inc., handed over to the Department of Education in Davao City a one-story, two-classroom school building.

The new building of the Tugbok National High School was constructed as part of the adopt-a-School Program of the government. Two-year classes will be held in the building.

With it are utilities, the high school's students come from the neighboring barangays of Angalan, Panacan, Catalunan Grande, Mintal, New Look, Upper Tugbok and Quiony.

As with other blue school houses, the new building has complete classrooms for blue including blackboards, desks, teaching aids. It is also fitted with complete toilet facilities.

The SM Foundation will take care of maintenance.